

FIVE NEW ZEALAND POETS:
A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL ACCOUNT
OF MANUSCRIPT MATERIAL

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by
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DEDICATION

To Five Poets for Their Friendship and Inspiration

PREFACE

The primary intention of this thesis is indicated by its title: it sets out to examine and catalogue selected manuscript versions of published and unpublished poems by five New Zealand poets.

Other material which is of a secondary nature in relation to the primary purpose of this study is also introduced, especially when I have regarded it as central to the development of a particular argument. This material largely consists of:

- letters and other relevant prose manuscripts;
- critical material existing either in manuscript or in some uncollected or ephemeral form.

In all such cases, I have concluded that the material warrants preservation because of its inherent value.

On those few occasions when I have drawn on familiar published material I have done so in the belief that the citations are relevant to a critical discussion arising from the manuscript sources.

The Checklist of manuscript holdings does not pretend to be definitive. It merely sets out to examine certain specified manuscript collections in some detail, while making reference to a number of other important collections. These major collections are:

- (1) Ursula Bethell's Papers : currently in the possession of Mr. Lawrence Baigent, Christchurch.
- (2) Eileen Duggan's Papers: as bequeathed to the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Wellington.

- (3) R.A.K. Mason's Papers: : currently in the possession of his wife, Mrs. Dorothea Mason, Auckland.
- (4) James K. Baxter's Papers : a collection in the possession of the writer, J.E. Weir, Christchurch.
- (5) Alistair Campbell's Papers : currently in his own possession.

It will be observed that, except in the case of Baxter, the manuscript collections are those of the poets themselves. Thus they have a special importance, especially because they have not yet been sighted by any other researcher or critic. Because of the vastness of the Baxter Collection in the Hocken Library, the limitations put upon its use, and the difficulty of tracing the many other collections which exist in this country, I have decided to concentrate on my own considerable collection of his poems, correspondence and other prose.

I am fully aware of the inadequacies of this bibliographical survey, but I also believe that it is not yet possible to make a comprehensive bibliographical study of the Papers of these poets.

One further reservation must be made: this thesis does not aim at providing a general critical survey of the poet's work or achievement. Whatever particular conclusions are reached are presented in the course of the study itself.

I am presenting as a supplement bibliographical material relating to the published writings of these five poets which forms part of a much more extensive bibliography of material relating to New Zealand Literature in general, and New Zealand Poetry in particular. I have been engaged in this work for a number of years and it has now been completed.

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I am similarly indebted to: Mr. Lawrence Baigent for allowing me access to Ursula Bethell's papers; the late Miss Eileen Duggan, Miss Julia McLeely and the Archdiocese of Wellington for allowing me to examine the Eileen Duggan Papers; the late R.A.K. Mason and Mrs. Dorothea Mason for their friendship, hospitality and permission to examine the R.A.K. Mason Papers; the late James K. Baxter and Mrs. Jacquie Baxter for their friendship and assistance; and Alistair Campbell for allowing me to examine his manuscript holdings.

A number of other people also deserve my gratitude: the staff of the University of Canterbury Library, especially the Research Librarians, Robert Erwin and Barbara Lyon, The staff of the General Assembly Library, the staff of the Hocken Library, Dunedin, and the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, with special reference to the assistance of Mr. Jim Traue.

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Lastly, I would like to thank my family and friends - all of whom have experienced various forms of neglect ever since I began this thesis - and my typist, Mrs. Brenda Leggett, for her interest and application.

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PART ONE

U R S U L A B E T H E L L

1874 - 1945

URSULA BTHELL

1. AN OUTLINE OF HER LIFE AND WRITINGS

Mary Ursula Bethell was the oldest of three children born to Richard and Isabel Anne Bethell (née Lillie) who travelled to England on their honeymoon in 1873.¹ The poet was born there on St. Faith's Day (6th October), 1874.

In the following year she was brought out to New Zealand "kicking and scratching",² as she is reported to have said, to indicate her unwillingness.

In 1876 Richard Bethell bought "Pahau Pastures", some 6,000 acres of land near Culverden, but it seems that the little girl spent most of her early years at Rangiora.

In New Zealand she attended schools at Opawa and Rangiora, as well as Christchurch Girls High School. In 1888 or 1889 she travelled to England and became a pupil at Miss Soulby's school, the Oxford High School for Girls. Then she spent a year at a Swiss school at Nyon on Lake Geneva.

1. These biographical details are collated from "Mary Ursula Bethell" - a typescript note found with her papers; Helen Simpson's biographical sketch in Ursula Bethell's Collected Poems, Christchurch, Caxton Press, 1950, p.11-12; J.W.B. Walshe's "Ursula Bethell", Christchurch, (194-) - a typescript of a paper delivered on behalf of the Adult Education Department at Canterbury College; a manuscript reminiscence of Ursula Bethell recorded for me by John Summers in 1969; The Poetry of Ursula Bethell by Joyce Merton (a thesis submitted for the Degree of Master of Arts in the University of New Zealand), 1949; and from Charles Brasch's "Notes" and the various memoirs grouped under the title "Ursula Bethell: Some Personal Memories", Landfall, 2 No. 4, December, 1948, p.244-45 and 275 ff.
2. Quoted by Dr. Helen Simpson in an address on Ursula Bethell and cited by Joyce Merton, op.cit., p.5.

About the age of eighteen she returned to New Zealand and took part in social work as "a cure for home-sickness..."³ At this time, for example, she helped found the Boys' Gordon Hall which offered sporting facilities, amusements and camping holidays for the boys of Christchurch.⁴ Some three years later she returned to England and then travelled to Europe where, for two years, she studied painting in Geneva and music in Dresden.

Ursula Bethell was especially interested in social work among boys and young men, and, as a member of the Anglican Grey Ladies community, she worked for four years or so with boys' clubs in South London. She then contracted a serious illness which forced her to withdraw from the community where she had been so happy. She referred to that period in her poem "Trance" where she described her earlier self as:

... one who had, perhaps, once known expectance,
Had sown in tears and learnt the grave joys of harvest,
Had long ago, perhaps, an enclosed garden tended,⁵
Had for a short while, perhaps, been happy there.

Late in 1904 Ursula Bethell travelled by sea to California and the Santa Cruz mountains as the first stage of her convalescence. In the following year she returned to New Zealand and lived for twelve months at Pahau Pastures. She then journeyed to England by way of the United States where she spent some months visiting various institutions involved in social work.

In the next few years Ursula Bethell travelled extensively - to France, Italy, Switzerland and through the United Kingdom. About 1908 she returned to Christchurch where she remained for five years. Then, towards the end of 1913

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3. Quoted in "Mary Ursula Bethell", Bethell Papers (now in the possession of Lawrence Baigent, Christchurch).
 4. Ursula Bethell persuaded Sir John Hall to found the Club which was later incorporated with the Y.M.C.A.
 5. Collected Poems, Christchurch, Caxton Press, 1950, p.38.

she again travelled to England by way of Java and India. She arrived there in May, 1914, but left almost immediately for Switzerland.

Ursula Bethell was in Lucerne when war was declared, escaping to England "... on the last refugee train to get through."⁶ During much of World War I she was in London, working as a night waitress at the New Zealand Soldier's Club and as an assistant at an information office for soldiers which was located opposite Westminster Abbey. Almost twenty years later, in a letter to J.H.E. Schroder, she said that she thought of 2.00 a.m. as "... an hour when it's easiest to die - and one associated in my mind with air-raid exhaustion - & a pause between serving 1 a.m. suppers & 4 a.m. breakfasts to soldiers in the 'Great' War ..."⁷ Not content with the extent of her social involvement, she also worked for the Boy Scout Movement and was a member of a school committee.

At some stage in 1919 Ursula Bethell returned to New Zealand which she left again only in 1926 to visit England for a final time. Her poems and letters reveal the extent of her love for the country of her birth. In "Mail", for example, she gives expression to that affection:

... I laid down my trowel when I heard the postman's whistle,
For I knew that he might bring an ocean-mail,
Went up to the gate-box and there found your letter,
And left my dahlias dormant in their nest.

You had been out walking on a Sunday,
And in the Regent's Park had much admired fine dahlias,
All with their names, in ranks, magnificent.

I could not go on with my gardening
For dreaming of loved and lost London,
And Regent's Park on summer Saturdays,
And hearing the shrill calls of young boys playing cricket,
And ceaseless distant scream of captive seals.⁸

6. "Mary Ursula Bethell", op.cit.

7. 8 June, 1933; MS Papers 280, Alexander Turnbull Library. (This collection is largely comprised of her letters and poems sent to J.H.E. Schroder). Cf. Section 5, "A Checklist of the Bethell Papers in the Alexander Turnbull Library" and also Appendix (1), "Some Further Extracts from Ursula Bethell's Letters to J.H.E. Schroder."

8. Collected Poems, p.24. Cf. also Appendix (2), "Extracts from a letter to E.H. McCormick."

was devoted."¹² She also enclosed copies in her letters to Lady Head, an English friend, whose brother, Arthur Mayhew, C.M.G., then Administrator of Colonial Education in London, submitted them in turn to Sidgwick and Jackson. Appropriately entitled From a Garden in the Antipodes,¹³ the poems were published in 1929 under the pseudonym "Evelyn Hayes" - a name chosen in memory of her colourful Celtic great-great-grandfather, Sir Henry Hayes of Cork. They had already been well received when read aloud to rural study groups and a number of them had appeared in two Australian periodicals - The Home and Art in Australia.

In 1932 Ursula Bethell published two collections of verse for or about children,¹⁴ The Glad Returning and The Haunted Gallery - poems which seem to have derived from her experiences in England prior to the Great War.

Shocked by the death of Effie Pollen in November, 1934, she left "Rise Cottage" and moved into a house in Webb Street to which she gave the name "St. Faith's". While she occupied two rooms the remainder of the house was given over to the Anglican Church for the training of Deaconesses. Somerset has recalled that the ten years after 1934 "... were spent in reading and writing, in church work and in encouraging and helping her ever-growing circle of young people."¹⁵

A more profound note had been apparent in her verse for some years, but with the death of her companion she did not seem able to write further poetry except for the annual memorials which she composed up to 1940. She did take time, however, to prepare two other verse collections for publication. Time and Place was published by the Caxton Press in 1936. Ursula Bethell

12. *ibid.*, p.275.

13. London, Sidgwick & Jackson Ltd.

14. Both volumes were published in London by Arthur H. Stockwell.

15. *op.cit.*, p.281.

admitted that it "... does not resemble the Garden tho' written in the same place & time ..." ¹⁶. This collection was followed by another Caxton publication, Day and Night, in 1939.

During her last years Ursula Bethell gave much of her time to younger creative people, listening, encouraging, criticising and leading them to a greater awareness of the demands of language, art and life.

She had an extraordinarily varied group of adult friends also. Charles Brasch has remarked that she "... counted among her friends musicians, writers, painters, clergy, students, former employees, boys of the clubs which she had run in Christchurch and the East End of London, farmers, gardeners, carpenters, teachers, explorers, journalists, pacifists and soldiers, men and women of every political and religious creed and of none." ¹⁷, and that she was "... a kind of pastor and counsellor ..." ¹⁸ to many. For her own needs she prescribed "... a full day of meditation each week ..." ¹⁹, and one minister of religion has remarked that she had "... the best theological library he had seen in New Zealand." ²⁰

In 1943 St. Faith's House was closed down and sold. In 1944 she spent some months in hospital where, after a long and painful illness she died of cancer on the 15th of January, 1945. She was buried next to her parents in the Anglican cemetery at Rangiora.

Her Collected Poems were published in 1950. ²¹

16. Letter to J.H.E. Schroder, 19 October, 1939. l.c.

17. "Notes", Landfall, 2 No. 4, December, 1948, p.244.

18. *ibid.*

19. Somerset, *op.cit.*, p.280.

20. Rev. Merlin Davies, quoted by Charles Brasch, *op.cit.*, p.245.

21. Christchurch, Caxton Press.

2. A DESCRIPTION OF HER LITERARY MANUSCRIPTS²²

(1) Material Relating to "From a Garden in the Antipodes"

The collection holds two manuscript sets of the poems published in that volume, but neither is complete:

(A) Manuscript Collection "A"

This is the earliest of the three collections. It contains copies of seventeen of the fifty-four "Garden" poems, of which twelve have slight variants from the published poems. They are handwritten on the back of letter-paper headed "Orient Line"/ England & Australia. s.s. "Orvieto".

(B) Manuscript Collection "B"

In this set are found one unpublished poem and copies of twenty-seven of the "Garden" poems, of which nineteen include variants from the published versions. They are handwritten on both sides of half-sheets of unlined letter-paper.

(C) Manuscript Collection "C"

This includes only two poems written on single sheets of unlined paper. These two untitled pieces ("Primavera" and "Dirge") are not contained in the other collections. The first-named has one variant reading from its published equivalent.

One typescript copy of the "Garden" poems also exists. It includes all of the poems in that volume except "Dirge" and "Trance".

There are a number of minor differences between these typescript poems and the published ones; these include the suppression or alteration of articles, the alteration of adjectives or adverbs (e.g., in "Response" the typescript reads "ever-blooming wattle" while the published poem reads "honey-scented wattle")²³, and a change in prepositions.

22. This study is chiefly concerned with Ursula Bethell's personal collection of papers. Other collections also exist - for example, those held by M.H. Holcroft, E.H. McCormick, John Summers and Charles Brasch - but it has not been possible to examine these. The Alexander Turnbull Library Collection is described in a Checklist.

23. From a Garden in the Antipodes, p.15. Cf. also Appendix (3), "The Language of Poetry".

The most extensive alterations are made in the final stanza of "Appel". In typescript it reads:

So long ago on Syrian hills the Shepherd
Smelt the sweet herbs and grasses of the uplands
Lifted his head and went his way rejoicing -

I live. I draw my breath, Yahweh sustains me.

The published version achieves a more melodious phrasing:

So long ago, I think, the Syrian Shepherd
Inhaled the sweet airs of his hills and valleys,
Drew in his breath and sang: Yahweh sustains me:
Lifted his head, and went his way rejoicing.²⁴

The poems in typescript were originally untitled, though numbered consecutively. Subsequently, the final titles were pencilled at the foot of each page.

On the reverse side of "Primavera" in Manuscript Collection "C" is found a list of nine titles, of which only one survived in the printed edition.

In the same place there is an outline of a descriptive note for the dust-jacket - a kind of dramatis personae - which is slightly different from that finally published:

The Gardener
The Housewife
A Distant Friend 32 Roses
A large cat
A small orange tree

Plants postmen passersby fowles lepidoptera etc

The first review of From a Garden in the Antipodes was written by D'Arcy Cresswell for the New Zealand News in London, and was subsequently republished in the Lyttelton Times where

24. *ibid.*, p.57.

it was noticed by Ursula Bethell's gardener. He undertook to mail a copy of it to Miss Pollen. His accompanying note reads:

I am real glad to be able to let you have the Review I was speaking about I dont want to say anything about it, but will leave it to yourself to form your own opinion of the criticism.

Effie Pollen forwarded the review immediately to Ursula Bethell who was then staying in Ashburton. Her accompanying note shows that she shared in the pleasure of a favourable review:

Today posted you 2 books which came today with Scotch post-man to whom I have [given] 5/- for his Xmas tip - & he was pleased & sent New Year Good Wishes to you.

Peter here yesterday afternoon from 3 to 5 about & when I said what was I to pay he said 5/-. He cut lawns - tied up plants & spat much. He saw in last Friday morning's Times a review of a book by Miss Hayes with the title you had told him was the name of your book. I asked him to post it to me which he did last night & I got it this morn: & hurried down to get it to you by 10 mail. ... I think the review is wonderfully good when the old pessimist admits he doesn't think a poet exists. He is evidently no gardener or interested in gardens. But you will be pleased at his saying you are a writer of "natural & unaffected verse" & he actually says he is happy to say so. And I like what he says about seeing "N.Z. scenery in proper perspective ..." all that quite satisfactory. Am longing to hear what you think of the review.

- (c) One ms. and one t/s. copy of what was originally the fourth verse of the poem:

The sons of men, their inexorable wrestling
with soil and storm appears but a beautiful
gesture now; the craft and travail of women
beneficent grace, beneath the silver shingled rooves;
the swift succession of new generations
the passing of a dance in a dream.

- (d) A page in typescript bearing the note "Remarks on 'The Long Harbour'." This appears to be a copy of an extract from a letter of D'Arcy Cresswell's which may not have survived. Cresswell's comments read:

It makes a splendid picture, tranquil, smooth and broad. "the black sea-bevelled stones" - New Zealand poetry might build its foundations with these very stones. Verses 4 and 5 I don't think quite brought into focus. I am inclined to think you overtax your powers by dealing with more than the immediate objects. Forgive this outspokenness. Your poetry seems to depend on compression, a clarifying of objects by a focus on one point. For instance in those two verses you do not say so much as you say in the line lower down "their tired, afar-translated bones" - a triumph of compression. Nor say so much in "Norseman, Gaul, Briton and German" as you say in "tempest-braving ancestresses". In the diffuse and larger picture you fill in from hearsay and fancy - "sailed hither singing" and "their songs are lost on the wind" - this is hearsay and fancy, mostly fancy. It is not worthy of "copy the dropping of tree-cool waters dripping from stone to stone". Verse 6 "I have walked" is a most lovely achievement. For its sake I would like 4 and 5 removed, as all is leading up to "afar-translated bones" The last verses make it plain whom is your company - the pioneers. I wish you had called it "The Old Forefathers". And yet I don't know.²⁶

It is clear from Cresswell's next letter that in her reply Ursula Bethell discussed the poem further, and also pointed out that "afar-translated", a phrase which had appeared

in the version she had sent, was an error in transcription, and should have read "afore-translated". In a further letter Cresswell continued the discussion:

Re: the Akaroa poem: I quite agree that "gathered" Verse 1. should remain. I wouldn't alter that verse at all now. I like the suggestion that "warm sun" is the subject of "gathered" really very well. Are you sure you did not intend this? I am again amazed to hear that "afar-translated" was an accident. I have heard of sublime inadvertance! I beg you to leave it. Though "afore" is good. But I don't like their being described as bones before they are dead; "Afore" points to their lives. "Afar" to their deaths & burial, which is what the verse is dealing with.

As for your next "Holy Innocents Day" ... I like very much the new verse of the Long Harbour in place of 4 & 5. I send it back with notes. Pray now send me the whole typed, with 4 & 5 omitted & the new verse in their place. "Colonist" is a good echo to "lutanist". 27, 28

- (C) A draft of the closing three lines of "November". The first two of these seem to have come relatively easily:

Thou, candled heart of man, thou knowest thy dear joys
Are richly added to thee, not to clutch the prize.

but the last line was not so readily constructed. The draft contains a number of alternative readings for the line, and these are reproduced here to illustrate the care she sometimes took to ensure that a line was satisfactory in both rhythm and sense:

-
27. 20 March, 1930. Cf. also Appendix (4), "An Exercise in Practical Criticism."
28. Ursula Bethell acceded in part to Cresswell's suggestion. She wrote a new verse to replace the existing fourth verse, but retained the fifth verse.

These in one season, thou shalt offer up likewise
 But, in one season, to be offered up likewise
 These also dedicate thou shalt offer up likewise
 But, in one season, thou shalt offer these likewise
 These ~~too-being~~^{also} dedicate, thou offerest likewise.
 But in one season, offer up likewise
 These shalt thou presently offer up likewise
 These to the altar dedicate, offer up likewise
~~But~~^{For} thou shalt presently offer these likewise
 But upon mine altar to be offered up likewise

There may have been other drafts also, for the line eventually chosen was "These, in due season, presently, thou offerest likewise."²⁹

- (D) A manuscript copy of the first twelve stanzas of "Autumn Afternoon". There is only one difference from the published version "... the long lilac shadows / Fell soft as the folds of a gossamer gown," was altered³⁰ at the suggestion of Cresswell, as is apparent from an undated letter of Ursula Bethell's:

...Here again I'm grateful - verse 6. "stage army"
 -yes, that's rather muddled - the sheep seem to move
 on across the field, but they are always the same
 sheep - so the stage crowd or army seems to move on
 but does not really progress - it's awkward

Verse 9. Yes "gossamer gown" is nasty - "Taffeta"
 I rejected because the "e" is silent - "satiny" too
 shiny. Dear, dear. It did look like the folds of
 a long dress . . .

I still cling to my motor-lorry! One must
 admit them now I fear in place of the wain - lorry
 isn't an ugly word. Do you think? -

I am meditating upon yr. instruction "Do not
 divide thought from description & pursue these
 independently".

29. Time and Place, p.17.

30. The line was eventually changed to read "Fell soft as the folds of an old, faded gown;", Time and Place, p.29.

(E) A manuscript draft of "Warning of Winter" which is entitled "Autumn - 1943". At the top left of the draft is written "Eros/Agape". The draft is otherwise identical with the published form of the poem with the exception of the first two lines of the fifth verse. In manuscript they read "Go with Eros. To darkness / Descends his flowered pathway," whereas the published poem has "Alas, alas, to darkness / Descends the flowered pathway," - the alteration makes more implicit the contrast between the natural and the spiritual states.

(F) An early pencilled draft of "May Night" which is of some interest because here, as occasionally in other drafts, Ursula Bethell has attempted to work out the metrical pattern of the lines:

The long nights of late May repose to the soul afford
 The ¹first ²snows are ³fallen to the ⁴base of the ⁵sentinel ⁶mountains ⁷
¹Lost ²now in the ³fusion of ⁴earth & ⁵heaven in ⁶general ⁷darkness

(3) Material Relating to "Day and Night"

(A) This includes a typescript copy of the poems for the printer which has some differences in punctuation and setting out from the published collection but no textual differences. The copy incorporates the printer's notes.

In the margin to the text of "Rose-Wreath" there is a note to the printer in Ursula Bethell's hand: "I did not know how to arrange this, so set it out in the old-fashioned manner to imitate a wreath (see Herbert etc)".

There are a number of title changes between the original typescript and the published poems. These alterations have been made in pencil on the typescript of the poems in another hand. They are:

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| "Midwinter Dawn. 1933" | - | "Midwinter Dawn" |
| "July 23. 1930. 6 a.m." | - | "23rd July, 1930" |
| "July 9. 1932. 7 a.m." | - | "9th July, 1932" |
| "August 4. 1930" | - | "Dark Morning" |
| "October 19. 1930" | - | "October Morning" |

On the typescript of "Summer Daybreak" is a comment in Ursula Bethell's hand: "I should have wished to reduce the number of question marks in the last part."

- (B) Other material relating to Day and Night includes a typescript copy of "At the Lighting of the Lamps" with a number of corrections, four consecutive drafts of "Nor'-West Evening, Winter", drafts of "Decoration" and "Limitation", and a manuscript copy of "Autumn on the Plain" which contains six alterations made in another hand (probably Cresswell's), of which four were adopted in the final version.
- (C) In this section are also to be found some notes towards the construction of the Dedication to Day and Night which appeared in that volume in the following form:

Rise Cottage 1924-1934

Ad te limen amabile levavi oculos
tibi haec carmina et quidquid inest
leporis pietatis signum dedico

One of her friends, probably Arthur Mayhew, suggested the form of the Dedication:

... Here is a suggestion for the dedication. "Levavi Oculos" is the Vulgate beginning to "I will lift up mine eyes to the Hills". I prefer the perfect tense of the Vulgate which signifies not only completion but continuance of the process. "Limen amabile" comes out of our Winchester "Dulce Domum": which phrase, by the way, you might insert before or after "Limen Amabile" if so disposed. "Pietas" - loyal affection - is the nearest the Romans ever get to gratitude. It was always associated with loyalty - to house or country - they never felt it otherwise!³¹

31. A letter dated 2nd July [1938?]. The signature, which is almost indecipherable, may read "Art."

(4) Drafts and Copies of Other Published Poems

- (A) One group is simply headed "Spares". It includes a copy of "At the Lighting of the Lamps", three copies of "To-day", and three copies of "Morning Walk" of which the earliest shows a textual change of "Twixt breakfast and washing of dishes" to "On a bright morning of winter".
- (B) Manuscript copies of the poems grouped under the title "Six Memorials" in her Collected Poems. These drafts contain various corrections and emendations.
- (C) Copies of four of the five "Other Poems" from the Collected Poems.
- (D) A copy of the full sequence³² of "By the River Ashley" which Ursula Bethell was revising shortly before her death.

(5) Material Relating to Her "Collected Poems"

Ursula Bethell had a longstanding practice of clipping from magazines and newspapers any items which she found especially interesting or which she thought would interest her friends.

Of those which remain with her literary papers, the most significant, perhaps, is one which she chose to stand as an epigraph to her Collected Poems. For some reason, it was omitted from the published volume:

Commenting on the fact that his native Suffolk dominates the work of Crabbe, Mr. E.M. Forster suggests that the early impressions of poets have not yet been properly studied and compared. Of their strength there can be no question; they

32. Cf. "A Checklist of Drafts of 'By the River Ashley'."

persist even when the poet is looking at something³³
new and describing themes where they do not apply.

Equally interesting in its literary implications and possibly intended as a further epigraph is a passage copied from a devotional book:

Nature becomes ... our tutor whose duty is daily to deliver us at Christ's door. It opens out into a Christ whose place & action are not historic only, but also cosmic ...³⁴

Of interest, too, in this context are the letters she wrote to Lawrence Baigent when she was ill. These reveal that she originally intended simply to reprint Time and Place and Day and Night:

I think by this time you will have heard from Basil Dowling where I am, & why. Inoperable cancer. I have decided that there should be a new edition of T & P & D & N. to be paid for by me (fully as in past) before I die. Could you put it through fairly quickly, as my time may be short?...³⁵

Some of her friends advised her to publish a more extensive collection. To this end, Lawrence Baigent, Allen Curnow and E.H. McCormick seem to have assisted in the selection of her poems from manuscript. Helen Simpson, too, also assisted her considerably at this time.

A further letter to Baigent shows that she had reservations about her "Memorials" for Effie Pollen:

... Enclose also the sad poems - only for yr. eyes
... I was right in thinking them unsuitable - unless the Akaroa one with 1st & last stanzas omitted. You wd. be right if you said that I should have learnt to "transcend" that grief - but I allowed myself to give way once a year, thoroughly ...³⁶

33. It has not proved possible to determine the source of this extract.

34. Forsythe, P.T., The Soul of Prayer, London, 1916, p.13.

35. An undated letter.

36. Letter to Lawrence Baigent, 2 June, [1944]

Her letter concluded with the note: "My own name must appear this time 'the grave's a fine & private place'."

In particular, it may have been Allen Curnow who convinced her of the need to issue her Collected Poems. Early in 1944 he was corresponding with her about his choice of her poems for A Book of New Zealand Verse. In his first letter on this subject³⁷ he listed the poems he wanted to include: they were to be taken from Time and Place and, especially, Day and Night. In May of that year he wrote once again about the anthology:

Thank you for sending me "Day and Night" and for the inscription in it, which encouraged me. I feel in need of good wishes for the anthology sometimes; because they are nearly all friends who have committed themselves to my discretion ...

I have added to your section of the book four of the "Garden" poems ... I needed to read that book more carefully ... There are certain rhythmic secrets in the appeal of some verse, mostly in you, & in Mason, which defeat me whenever I try a formulation. It is in this way that I feel so laboured & contriving in my³⁸ own verse: perhaps that is why the reasons escape me.

In her reply she informed Curnow that she intended to republish Time and Place and Day and Night. While approving of this step, he stated his preference for a different kind of publication:

What strikes me immediately is: A volume of Collected Poems, beginning with the Garden poems, & including all the others. You, or I, or McCormick might have preferences: but I can think of no poem which readers should not have the chance of judging for themselves. It's not as though you had any Juvenilia to repent of. Also, now I have read them together, & with one purpose in view, I see the progression - far more profound than the pattern of seasons in "Time and Place" - from

37. An undated letter, [1944]

38. 18 May, 1944.

the Garden to Day & Night & I would say: don't think, if you can help it, of a "Selected Poems", with all the harrowing suggestions & counter-suggestions & accidental preferences. The work can't suffer from a complete preservation.³⁹

(6) Ursula Bethell's Journal Entries

Among Ursula Bethell's papers there is a small pad of notepaper covering the period 1929-1932 which reveals the extraordinary precision with which she noted the appearance of the landscape and the sky from her home on the Cashmere Hills.

The entry for the 1st of August, 1929, illustrates the exactness of her observations:

5.55 1929

Aug 1. 6 a.m. Waking Looking westwards - over the plain a deep velvet blackness. Very bright yellow lights twinkling - switch on Lamp green curtains just stirring. Rising & looking out eastwards hundred of yellow lights - High in the sky narrow (dwindling) moon ^{almost} ~~upright~~ ^{leaning a} ~~little~~ - horns pointing left - faint aureole in cloud - faint reflection in sea - Colour paler than electric lights Further east, almost as high an immense star same colour & brightness - a fainter star above that - as the [?] ... on a hint of redness - A Cockcrow - Six minutes later Dawn all ^{about} ~~along~~ the eastern sky - & everything brighter - More cocks.

A train puffing

Birds piping & a bell (asylum?)

6.30 Dawn all over sky. Moon still bright. Sky looks blue between green curtains swaying a little more now Looking out - lights (quivering?) out in patches & singly Some wreaths of mist over city. Fields white with frost. Whiter snow on mt tops dark blue below. Trains puffing Birds = sparrows, aus. magpie - bush warbler - blackbird - gumtrees. A fine day. Very good. No frost in garden.

7 a.m. my Light can go out.

7.10 It is day. Eastern facades of mountain bring pink western sky turquoise - washed over with warm ochre - Much warm colour . . . willows russet - mists drifting

A lovely morning. Few feathery clouds.

The houses now catching sunlight. showground & race course building is pink . . . golden.

9.30. An utterly clear sky of sapphire & turquoise^{down to} - long line of white mts with azure shadows & azure toning into green of plain. All soft & harmonised now. The mists a general warm haze ...

Such an attention to detail may serve as a reminder that she had studied painting earlier in her life. The result of this is that her verse exhibits a pictorial quality similar to that of a landscape painter.

Moreover, it was this almost scientific interest in the detail of the changing face of nature which liberated her verse from the excesses of Georgian fantasy.

(7) A Description of Her Unpublished Verse

It had been thought that Ursula Bethell's earliest published work dates from 1924 when, at the age of fifty, she came to live at "Rise Cottage". It seems more probable, however, that her two little-known collections, The Haunted Gallery and The Glad Returning, contain her first published writing.⁴⁰

Her friends had conjectured that she must have written poetry in her youth, but there appeared to be no literary evidence of this. Among her manuscripts, however, there is one envelope containing six poems, four of which belong to a much earlier time. One poem, in fact, is dated "July 19. 1904". Written on ship letter-head paper, it is a long descriptive account of a sea journey from England to North America:

Cousin Doff I greet you well!
'Spite the ocean's damned swell
(In poetry that word is used,
Two-syllabled, it is excused)
My state of health remains at par
Except for a vestige of catarrh

.

First there was the tedious ocean
Where I took your Daddy's potion
(One must make the rhyming matchy
or I should have called it cachet)

.

40. No copy of these collections is held in any New Zealand library with the exception of xeroxed copies held in the Library of the University of Canterbury.

Onwards then by South Pacific
 Railroad, at a pace terrific -
 Santa Barbara I viewed -
 And next day my way pursued
 Unto big, Los Angeles,
 Gardens full of green palm-trees
 Groves of luscious oranges . . .

.

It is a lively and unpretentious verse letter which shows that twenty years before she began the "Garden" poems Ursula Bethell could write accomplished formal, if light, verse.

The three other poems of the period, "Cassandra Speaks", "Stanzas, for framing & placing inside a wardrobe" and the untitled verse ["A parcel for me"], although not deserving serious consideration, are, nonetheless, accomplished poetic exercises.

Grouped with these pieces is a later, untitled verse which dates from "Rise Cottage" days:

Of Michael, our cat, we are persuaded
 That no other such animal,
 No small furry garden lion,
 Approaches him, even distantly,
 In handsomeness and charm ...

These lines are identical with a prose description of the cat which is found elsewhere among Ursula Bethell's manuscripts: "Of Michael, our cat, we are persuaded that no other such animal, no small furry garden lion, approaches him even distantly in handsomeness and charm." With only minor differences the poem repeats the text of the prose passage, leading the reader to surmise that it may have been her practice to record the "Garden" poems in prose form before determining their line-lengths.

The last of the pieces contained here, "Financial Depression, 1931", has the same conversational ease that is found in her first verse-letter:

Poverty, Saint Francis' spouse,
 Welcome to our little house!
 Ne'er rich, we now prepare
 For what the French,
 When they retrench,
 Call "Le strict necessaire."

.

And, good St. Francis, charge your mate
 That she be compassionate,
 And at first not too severe -
 You were a youngster
 When you turned songster,
 But I am in my fifty-sixth year!

A second envelope bears the one word "Rejects". It contains a typed copy of a slight and very personal poem in memory of Effie Pollen - two clippings of published poems which she subsequently rejected - "Retreat", which was published in the North Canterbury Gazette in the course of 1933, and the "The Piano-Tuner", which appeared in the Christchurch Press on the 30th April, 1936. Whereas the first may have been rejected because it is a dramatic poem and Ursula Bethell must have realised that her strength lay in recording her own reflections on life and nature, the language of the second seems laboured and contrived.

"A Valediction", from the same group, is a superior achievement, but it does not have the authentic stamp of her art:

Poet, your passage was to me
 As if, beside a wintry sea
 A child had strayed, and, listening there
 To the wild voices on the air,
 Beguiled by the vast privacy,

Sudden another child describes
 With the same pleasure in his eyes,
 And knows straightaway he too has heard
 The sea-call of the invisible bird,
 And multitudinous moans and cries

Pent in a rare, peculiar shell
 Storm-rent from cavernous sea-hole ...
 And looks again, and finds him gone,
 And by the margin wanders on
 Wishing that alien kinsman well.

"Bits I cant be bothered with" is written on another envelope which contains mostly drafts of poems which she did not bring to completion. One of these, "A Story before Tea", is a domestic verse drama intended for four characters: "Grandfather in armchair, with cat on knee. Great-aunt in armchair, with eartrumpet. A very little boy on hassock. A very little girl on hassock beside grandfather." The text runs to thirty-four lines.

In the same group are lesser drafts of four untitled poems, a more extensive draft of one poem, and, finally, three consecutive drafts of the one poem in this group which is relatively close to completion. "To a Bellbird Trying Over its Notes" attempts to achieve the richness and suggestiveness of high romanticism:

Oh hid musician in thy high myrtle-bower
 Veiled by thick vines and rosy flowered wreathes
 Tuning thy viol to yet finer instrument,
 In consonance with tunes we may not hear;
 O secret sculptor, chiselling thy dream
 With tinkling hammer-strokes, until the cold
 ... marble emulates a form
 Of pure perfection we may never see.
 Celestial goldsmith faceting bright gem
 Till all the light of day is prisoned in it,
 Only to drop it down, to drop it deep
 Into fern-dark earth musked pool of green
 Forgive us now that our ill-omened step
 Disturbs this moss ...

It is artificial in a way that her best poems are not, and it remains a literary exercise which fails to transcend its influences.

One large brown manila envelope is inscribed "Poetry Rubbish Heap". It contains the following poems:

- a) "Morning. July 23 1932"
 - a rather stiff and pietistic piece.
- b) "Very Early"
 - similarly pietistic.
- c) "Short Story"
 - a published poem which she may have judged to be overtly moralistic.

- d) "For Sister Janet"
- an occasional elegy.
- e) "To Dr. T.Z. Koo"
- occasional verse. Scm
- f) "Pedigree Pup"
- a piece of light verse.
- g) An untitled poem
having the first line "'Tis Love, 'Tis Love, the
Stars reply," which was intended to be Part 2 of
"At the Lighting of the Lamps" but which may
have been rejected as being too explicitly didactic.
- h) A further untitled poem ["Thus my imaginings ... "]
intended as Part 3 of the same poem and
necessarily rejected with the previous extract
because of its close relationship.
- i) "The Public Baptism of an Infant"
- a mere devotional.
- j) Three drafts of an untitled, whimsical poem
about the arrival of a new car intended for church
work.
- k) "The Ancient"
- a narrative poem employing a formal rhythmical
pattern with which she may not have felt at
ease.
- l) "Easterly"
- a descriptive poem which she seems to have
considered too light in content, but which
deserved publication.
- m) "The Retreat"
- a narrative and dramatic poem. Ursula Bethell
clearly realised that she wrote best about
herself and her own concerns.
- n) "Ditty, About a Bellbird"
On the margin of this page she wrote "Silly thing
might do for a Song".
- o) "Vale"
- one of the "Garden" poems which deserved publication.
- p) "Spectacle"
- another poem from that group, but one which is
not as well finished as the others.
- q) "O you tropical climbing plants"
- an untitled poem from the same group which she
did not bring to completion.

- r) "Piano-Tuning"
- regarded, perhaps, as too pretentious.
- s) "Delay"
- another poem which might have been chosen for publication. It may be, however, that the poet thought that she did not handle the formal rhyme-scheme and metrical pattern sufficiently well.

It is the unpublished "Garden" poems which interest us first. "O you tropical climbing plants" remains only in draft, but it appears to be a final draft and would not have been out of place in that first publication:

O you tropical climbing plants -

Bougainvillea Cyphera, Mandevillea Suavolens,
Tecoma Australis, Tacsonia Mollissima -

Forget, oh forget your true latitudes
Forgive, forgive me for planting you
On this stark hillside where no forest trees overarch.

Deign to caress these dead jarrah posts,
My firewarmed dwelling shall shelter you,
Nestle awhile, cling low, try to sleep.

Short is this turbulent winter,
Short and soon spent is its fury
September brings spring, and then you shall lift up your
heads.

And when the hot winds of summer
Are wilting the hardy perennials
You shall spread sinuous arms up to the burning sky -

And under the shade of your thicket
We will thankfully grumble
About the terrible heat, and take our afternoon tea

Tacsonia, Bougainvillea, Tecoma, Mandevillea,
Mollissima, Cyphera, Australis, Suavolens!

"Spectacle", too, has the simplicity and naturalness of the best of her early writing:

It is disaster to the young lambs,
It is vexation to the farmer,
It is discomfort to the cloistered citizen, -

But oh, upon a late-spring morning
(So late that yesterday we called it summer)
After a night of hailstorms what magnificence,
Beyond the bright green fields, and streams, and yellow gorse
To see the mountains all new-mantled to their base in snow!

Evidently Ursula Bethell intended to include "Vale" in From a Garden in the Antipodes but it was removed from the typescript collection before publication:

Farewell now my garden
Garden of exile, garden of my pilgrimage
Farewell, and for ever. My tools are put away.

Flourish, my garden, for them that come after me
Henceforth in perpetuity, yield flowers, offer shade.

And henceforth and forever, here, in this garden,
From the rising of the sun, there, upon the ocean,
To his going down, there, upon the mountains,
Henceforth and forever may the Lord's name be praised.

A further poem from this group, "Delay", illustrates the more sombre mood of her later published work and the emblematic approach so frequently found there:

Though September be in, the golden sun has forgotten to shine;
Black and unyielding loom the towers of insignis-pine;
The sky is grey and dark, the soil is dark and cold, -
Yet rain reddens the purpling willows, and sudden gold,
Surprising gold overtakes the dun-green wattle-trees,
And is creeping along those grim gorse-boundaries;
Jonquil assemblies with yellow gold reward our faith,
And sleeping incense awaits the sun's enkindling breath ...

Mark how dear Earth, in storm's despite, affirms her spring!
Hark! for bird riro-riro in rainy dusk delights to sing;
Let leaden heart break, break; let fertile tears fall down;
Soon, soon, shall sorrow her flowery garland wear, and
golden crown.

Two other groups of poems remain. An envelope headed "To Be Published", contains copies of later poems - some of which, in fact, were subsequently published, namely, "14th August 1930", "In a Hospital" and "Kaikoura, Winter, 1941", all of which were chosen for her Collected Poems. "Parakeets", originally intended as a section of "By the River Ashley", was published in the North Canterbury Gazette on the 21st of July, 1933, and "Nursery Rhyme for Harvest" appeared in the Christchurch Press. Three unpublished poems complete this group - "Canterbury Willows", "Happy Thought", and "Easterly", a slightly revised form of the poem also deposited in "Poetry Rubbish Heap":

Sharp scimitar, the curving sea
cuts into the misty shore.
Steel teeth of fierce east-wind
bite into the frosty shine
of sun back-flashed from frigid sea
and tear the tussock of our bleak hill-top.

It shall be likened, this close-attacking torment,
to cut and thrust of divine rapier
interrogating the rivets of our accoutrement;
to the precious castigations of apprentice years,
or stinging spur advancing us ...

Oh, listen to the exultation of sun-summoned skylark
ascending on the east-wind!

Ursula Bethell's last literary project was the revision of the long autobiographical and descriptive narrative entitled "By the River Ashley". Among her manuscripts there are seventeen sections of the poem of which "Parakeets" was published separately, while only two other sections of the typescript were used in the published sequence. The remaining fourteen sections were not published in any form.

Some of the material, for example Section Four, appears to have been intractable and too slight for the poet's intentions:

"THE RANGIORA SHOW".
Illustrious words. Magnificent expectations.
Heat, dust, crowds, people getting in front of you.
How much nearer the real our autumn pastime
Under the trees - acacia, mimosa,
(Not "wattle" then) and the orchard
And bluegums sheltering us from the outside world.
But willows for horses of course.
That thick bough is a draught horse,
What a fellow to manage - he plunges and rears.
First Prize at a glance. Halter and ticket him,
And tie at his stall in the hedge ...

Such our imaginations,
Such were our joys.
Parents, pity children -
Spare them those toys.

This is conversation "about" an event. The best of Ursula Bethell's poems present a miniature drama in which the events are re-enacted.

Some of that strength is found in Section Seven of the sequence:

Of late when I saw a cruel moon
riding alone in the night-sky
sure of his Mesopotamian hymns,
wind-driven white clouds hastening eastwards
seeming to flee in fear from his terrible face,

I thought of the child who, wind-awakened,
crept to her dormer-lattice and peered trembling
at bluegums tossed and torn by the nor'west storm,
their gaunt boughs shaken in torment before the
face of a dazzling moon, ...

Oh fear, fear, clutching the heart - not yet,
only the hint, the falling away,
the river, they said, bank to bank -
Tarawera, Tarawera the terrible!
Gone, gone the Pink Terraces! talked of
and made into pictures of dream -
the comet, pointed at, there, amid the usual stars,
the shuddering fear at the heart of the known ...

In those passages which express a terrible or harmonious contact with nature the poet is most at home, but there are occasional successes, too, among the vignettes which are a feature of the poem - Section Thirteen, for example:

Grey thousands, grey thousands,
From south of the river,
The great river, Port o' London,
Because of Queen Victoria,
Over the bridges, the great bridges,
Pouring westwards into St. James's Park,
Because of Queen Victoria.
The little pretty cream ponies,
The little pathetic, formidable, gun-carriage,
The respectful mourning march,
Chopin, sad, sad, broken-hearted -

Our might and our grandeur and six cream ponies.

Oh what shall we do to be saved?

What shall we do to be saved?

The kings and the captains and the potentates,
Scarlet and gold and patches of black in carriages
In the smoky London fog on a fine afternoon.

These are, perhaps, the successes of the unpublished sections of the poem. There can be little doubt that the best work is represented by the published sections.

In his memoir of Ursula Bethell, D'Arcy Cresswell made an observation which has since become a critical commonplace. He wrote of the way in which she rendered the New Zealand scene familiar:

She was the first to tell the New Zealanders to pull down the blind, to shut out the view, the immensity, the distance, the isolation, which Pember Reeves and others laboured in vain to make explicable and familiar. Pull down the blind on all that, she said, and go back to just peeping out ... New Zealand wasn't truly discovered, in fact, until Ursula Bethell, "very earnestly digging", raised her head to look at the mountains.⁴¹

Undoubtedly part of her achievement, as Cresswell observed, lay in the clarity with which she was able to focus her powers of observation on a small plot of ground and there trace the recurring drama of death and rebirth. At the same time, the critic has failed to discern the real reason why she appears so much at home in the New Zealand landscape. It is not so much that she determines to "... shut out ... the immensity ..." ⁴², but that she renders the wild country domestic with a gardener's transforming imagination; she turns the general scene into a greater garden.

In the course of her development Ursula Bethell came to rely increasingly on a sacramental interpretation of natural imagery, but her growing concern for literary form all too often blurred the sharp visual and linguistic effects which made her "Garden" poems so memorable: she wrote best when she relied on a direct, imaginative response to the landscape.

41. "Ursula Bethell: Some Personal Memories", *l.c.*, p.283.

42. *ibid.*

Darkness and light, flowers, earth, stones, trees, birds and water - these are the real force behind her poems, never abstractions. In her best work she communicates closely with that earth from which arise intimations of our immortality.

It is a fruitless quest to seek in her verse the beginnings of a native tradition. What she brought to our literature was a love for our dying world, an exact observation of the natural scene, a transforming imagination and a cultured sensibility.

But above all she brought a deeper note to New Zealand poetry. Wave, bird, stone, flower - all were transformed by her Christian Romanticism so that very often, without strain, she is able to discover the one-in-the-many and thus achieve a genuine universality of reference.

From the Cashmere hills Ursula Bethell gazed out on a timeless garden. Her best work interprets "the secret meaning of the symbol: 'clear'"⁴³ and bridges the gap between life and death.

43. "October Morning", Collected Poems, p.84.

3. APPENDICES

(1) Some Further Extracts from Ursula Bethell's Letters
to J.H.E. Schroder⁴⁴

... Back to earth yesterday - "Rolling Stones", etc., - walking about all the time, little written - only fragments, out of which I have just tinkered these three,⁴⁵ and the trivial theme of No. 2 makes me afraid of borrowed plumes At all events ... no false quantities ("antinomy" an old friend from the pulpit which one mixes up sometimes with antimony, perhaps!) Please excuse No. 3! Of course the bellbird, just now, listening to its own note, is beyond words. I'm not sure that you like these néozélanderies ...

3 March, 1932.

... We are busy making our good resolutions - more order in the home - system - self-denial - daily life a work of art, etc., etc. ...

I don't know whether the N.Z. Sun has blinded D'Arcy Cresswell's critical judgment, but he now calls my compositions politely "poems" (I'll do the same!) and thinks so well of the Akaroa one that he asks for it for his anthology, shortened - the Econome loves a new word - Seated in the kitchen covering a batch of chutney just now & surrounded by kind presents of baskets of fruit, & a cauldron of black currant jelly bubbling on the stove, she exclaimed "This is my anthology!") I have told him that it belongs to the Press. I am so glad he is happy doing that anthology and find his criticism helpful and stimulating ...

30 December, 1932.

... I am so glad you liked "Autumn Afternoon" ... it was all true. I can't remember how I got the tune - once having got that (in the right key or mood) it goes on of itself - or doesn't! I can only do a little gardening. When there is less tune, it goes slower and I do more gardening - for instance, The Long Harbour One thing I recall about Autumn Aftn [sic] is having discussed with a friend who [sic] husband is a General Carrier whether one could put a lorry into poetry, & taking this opportunity.

The English Autumn is so much longer & lovelier ... D'Arcy pointed out that one line in Burke's Pass was a beat short and I meant to send a correction ...

8 June, 1933.

44. Ms. Papers 280, (J.H.E. Schroder). Alexander Turnbull Library.

45. "Rock Crystal", "In the Forest", "The Bellbird".

... I've now tidied up the enclosed - of which you wished the refusal. If you do not want it, may I have it back ... I know that D'Arcy wd [sic] object that there are not the same number of feet in every stanza, but if I begin to count I'm lost, and have to trust to a general sense of the fitness of things. I think it makes another N.Z. picture but am not sure - it's confusing to linger over things

8 September, 1933.

... I've been looking up my commerce with the Press & find that I was right in thinking that there is still a batch in yr. hands to be looked at - they must want weeding & trimming by this time, I guess, & one in particular I'm uneasy about - I think it was called Limitation - anyhow it's about time & I'd like really to consult Archdeacon Whitehead in case it's philosophically bunkum - not all that the Muse whispers makes sense ... Several are standing over till the right season "October Spring" & "Spring On the Plain" e.g. (but I'm doubtful about this one) ... You wished for Rainy Morning & it's suitable but is it good enough? I have been using metre & have lost my ear for irregular verse I'll hold it back another day ...

9 August, 1933

... I am glad that you will not print Rainy Morning - it's not really fit for the public - perhaps if I dig it about & dung it it may improve but a wearisome job ... a tinny little lyre, mine! I'd better stop and I am thinking too much of what this one, & that, will think ...

27 September, 1933.

... I have only found one of the mistakes in the Garden, p.47⁴⁶, and have now forgotten what the others were - I haven't looked into the book for many months & confess that it's hard to do so - in fact, tho' I suppose it's really too sentimental to say so, I found I couldn't sometimes see the print for tears. It seems to me, now, pretty good, as far as it goes, & I am glad that the person who then was put it down while there was time, & the people who read it won't know how dreadful it is to the writer that it's all past & gone ... The mistakes I have found in Time & Place are p.11 elixir, p.26 accomplished, p.27 mien p.33 lights. There may be others. They are misprints, I could not see proofs, being away at Mt. Harper at the time - so D. Glover deserves much praise for turning it out so well...

27 May, 1937.

46. "came" for "come" in "Elect". The errors mentioned have not been repeated in her Collected Poems.

... Here is now the little book⁴⁷. Thank you for making me feel happy & comfortable about a press review. I think you may not like it very much - it does not resemble the Garden tho' written in the same place & time ... I was anxious to make my bow before the more important Centennial publications appear! ...

Akaroa is the one place in N.Z. for which I feel an affection as one does for English places - everywhere else it is another sort of response ...

27 October, 1939.

... I am so glad that you took the landscape line of approach - just right for the purpose I think - and that you seized the occasion to preach the gospel of true patriotism - what you say makes me feel almost sorry that I wasn't born in New Zealand! tho' it has been no affectation in me to be wont to call England "Home" - childhood however was spent in Canterbury and that must count ...

11 November, 1939.

47. Day and Night

(2) Extracts from a Letter to E.H. McCormick

In 1940 Ursula Bethell received a letter from E.H. McCormick which was extremely critical of her and which she regarded as "... a chance to thrash out a better understanding ..."⁴⁸ Her reply reveals a great deal about her:

... I am old, I am lonely, I am tired, tired, tired but I know I must go on, & learn more things ... I don't think in terms of classes, and civilisations etc. I think of this person, & that, & that - (Oh I dare say a young woman university graduate today thinks easily in terms of classes, social history etc. - but I am a Victorian.) My thought was: if he knew this person & that ... there wouldn't be this bitter tone of resentment about England etc.

Good of their kind (I am going through your attack line by line!) You mustn't take me as a sample of a Country (England) or a Class! I wouldn't be a good specimen - I am too variegated ... That's one of the sad things about me! - I don't belong anywhere in particular - I've dodged to and fro - my friends are of all sorts of classes & countries - I'm not a fair sample - I have not been able to settle, always there was some event, some frustration ...

I didn't know that I talked so much about England and the past. I must "watch out" - I suppose I cast about for something interesting to tell! There's not very much to be said about my actual life of domestic toil! ... Yes, I suppose I do dwell on the past. Isn't it characteristic of advancing years? No I don't really think about it! ...

I did not ... "indignantly repudiate" the suggestion of N.Z. as a birth-place. ...

You say that I ought to know more about N.Z. I dare say that is true - But up on the hill we had our hands pretty full, & were so happy in our little life, we didn't want to move round in Chch. I'll admit that I have always disliked Chch as a place to live in - (not the Hill) - after Effie went I began to realise that I ought to throw myself more into life out here - since I wasn't going back. And I've tried to - tho' my life down here is in a narrow groove of course -

No, I don't look back to England thru' "rose-coloured haze" - I look at it through tears, that's all.⁴⁹

48. Misc. Ms. papers 1020, Turnbull Library, [1940]

49. *ibid.*

(3) The Language of Poetry

One of the envelopes in Ursula Bethell's collection is headed "'Press', Poems & Correspondence".

In one of the cuttings, dated 19 March, 1932, "V.I.R." criticised the manner in which she used "parabole" and "diastole" to rhyme with monosyllables in her poem "Weathered Rocks" which had appeared in the Press on the previous Saturday. Her reply was published immediately below his letter:

Think how foreign words are roughened or softened and made over for English use, especially in verse. Think of au-re-o-la, turned to aur-e-ole; di-as-ta-sis in surgery turns into di-a-stase for chemistry; di-as-po-ra, again, is the chemist's di-a-spore; Greek diatribe mutes its final e in English; and so on. "Parabole", by the way, not given in the Concise Oxford Dictionary, is given by Chambers as "Rhetorical for parable."

I have little Latin and no Greek; but French I know well and like, and it is from the French language that these words leak in; that I know because so often a French word presents itself most a propos, though I do not dare to use it; "attelage", for instance. Sometimes it is German. I have wanted badly to say "endly" for "endlich". Perhaps borrowing from another tongue is a sign of imperfect command of one's own. But all these words are in the French dictionary - diaphane, diastase, diastole, diasthese - all tri-syllables. May one not, reverting to the past, follow suit?

Her manuscripts also hold a copy of a private letter to her correspondent in which she said that more significant than her public apologia was "... the fact ... that before acceptance by the Press, the verses had passed the censorship of a competent scholar in England ..."

She may have included with that letter a poem entitled "The Plea of Weathered Rocks" which exists in manuscript with her papers:

Arthur passed me for correct,
 Lettered, he, in Greek and Latin;
Virile critic, please respect
 'Diastole' since he left that in;

Say I'm ugly, say I'm bad,
 With your erudition blast me,
Say I'm overbold, but add:
 Arthur passed me.

(4) An Exercise in Practical Criticism

Ursula Bethell was accustomed to invite comments on her work from her friends. Arthur Mayhew was the first, but others included D'Arcy Cresswell, E.H. McCormick, Allen Curnow, Lawrence Baigent and, in theological matters, Archdeacon Whitehead.

D'Arcy Cresswell was one of Ursula Bethell's earliest and most perceptive critics. His comments on "The Waves" led her to reply:

Your rejection of this one surprises me since The Long Harbour is acceptable to you. You say that its [sic] neither prose nor verse - but surely the rhythm is as much measured as in the other? I wonder whether you would be less severe about the subject if you were friends with the biological interpretation of the planet. "All realities will sing" says Coventry Patmore - the biological view is very vivid to me & materially real ... I feel rather obstinate about this piece because it has been submitted to my court of appeal in London & approved! He's quite a fastidious lover of English letters & disliker of modernist verse - & his brother, a theologian, gave his imprimatur to the theological waves! oh, well ...⁵⁰

Cresswell continued the literary dialogue:

I agree with you about ... a man with a vocation, & sure of a monument. A laughing-stock, something like me. The farmers around here call us the cranky Cresswells. I'm pleased with that!

I should very much like to go to Akaroa, for the reasons you give. Alas! if only I could move about, for I am deeply concerned where I am ...

I return the batch to which you give comments to my comments keeping "Autumn Afternoon" if I may for a time. I still am unmoved by "Waves", perhaps for the reasons you say. Did poor Patmore say "Realities will sing"? A fine & true phrase. But how does it help! It didn't help him in the least. For whom do realities sing? And for oh how many do they not even murmur.

50. A section (undated) of one of Ursula Bethell's letters.

Of the remainder: Levavi Oculos (?) begins without feeling. Here emotion & description are divorced with a vengeance. Verse 3 makes an appeal to the feelings, & is thereby improved. No, it does not approach The Long Harbour. It is too diffuse. You must concentrate & restrain your feelings until they will not be restrained. You walk into print equipped with wisdom & a wide range of words. But there are good things in it. I am not now comparing you with contemporary writers but with the purest idea of poetry.

Music is not made of images: but images are made of music, Orpheus-like. I refer to "Weathered Rocks". This again, like all yours, has distinction.

October Spring⁵¹ is a powerful picture. It is powerfully evocative of feeling & experience. Why, why has the third line of Verse 11 an extra foot. Or has it? The whole metrical scheme is so wayward - unmusical. While the whole has music - wilfully broken it seems. "Hand-twist" splendidly vivid & actual. Rainbows "stolen" - good.

April Autumn: like the above. Good. remarkable. makes me to feel & think. Too great an equipment of expression comparatively too little emotion. I must steal your expressions, they provoke me. This is good. I am keeping it meanwhile.

"Midwinter Morning"⁵² - "julian night" seems quite unjustified. Are you not playing with sound? julian - jewel. This is not poetry, but so nearly!

"August 4"⁵³ - a poem! But how disappointing the last verse - the last line above all. I shall keep it awhile. Here observation, & expression serve feeling. A poem - or nearly. Yes, a poem. I shall write you further about it, with the others I am keeping.

"Winter Night" opens finely. The second verse spoils it. The first two lines are good. The last two bad. "All this prodigality" is most ugly & trite. "All" is even superfluous. . It is not like you to emphasise, without apparent necessity, that a great deal of sky can be seen through quite a small window. Why "weak" sight? It seems active & strong at the moment. Next verse: not "offering to be". Why not "While I lie quiet, offering my heart, a wintry wind-harp." So you do not see the improvement? Not "whereby" - "whereon", or "wherewith". Sappho, I think, has said something like this. It is very feminine, & excellently intended. I would sacrifice the second verse.⁵⁴

51. i.e., "Spring Storm", Time and Place, p.10.

52. No poem with this title is found among Ursula Bethell's manuscripts or published work.

53. Probably "14th August, 1930".

54. Only one of Cresswell's suggestions was adopted by Ursula Bethell - the elimination of "weak".

"Cloudy Night" is just description & privacy. Too much of your verse is merely private in application. Its publicity is partly the success of The Long Harbour. It breathes a general condition, shared by many & understood by all. A reference to death in the midst of universality or enduringness, is poignant by contrast. There again it succeeds. Even your choice of words in these & in many others, emphasises your privacy - a cultishness - not understood by all. Thoughts are often obscure. Feelings never.

The statements in "Candour" add nothing, I think, to the picture. There is no synthesis, no inscrutable relation of images one with another, & words, the same as confronts us in nature, the inscrutable harmony of all. In this harmony the commonplace & dis-connected is suddenly endowed with uniqueness, cohesion & life.

I shall keep "Winter Night" meanwhile also.

Now the two from the Religious Dept. "In a Hospital" is good verse. "The Crucifix" the same. But nothing more.

Your last of March 3. brings me "At the Lighting of the Lamps" which you have called your chief work. I must disagree. The Long Harbour is far ahead. I haven't yet studied the former, but it seems a narrower privacy. I'll let you hear what I think of it. Devotional verse is nearly always like that - even The Hound of Heaven. It, The H. of H., is meant to be universal, but is mainly just ghostly, for all its rhetoric.⁵⁵

E.H. McCormick seems to have assisted Ursula Bethell in the selection of the poems for Day and Night. Among her manuscripts is found a section of one page of a letter from Ursula Bethell to McCormick on which she has written some questions and he has replied with brief notes.⁵⁶ The text is as follows:

No. 1 (Norwest Night)
a special sort of night. My friend in London [did not?] condemn this as he did "Night Rain" because it was "delirious" -

(Query - should the meanings of the wind & the riro be put in italics?) - I think so.

55. 20 March, 1933.

56. Underlined passages represent McCormick's comments.

No. 2. After Dark. Rhymed - probably no good -

(Query - if approved - "eve's one star" unconsciously lifted from some well-known poem? sonnet? but I cannot recall it. should these words be in italics?) Keats, perhaps, or Sp.; but I wouldn't italicise.

No. 3 & 4⁵⁷ Merely trivia I think & not to be collected -
 3. I rather think "what honey what hidden rewards" is a borrowed phrase? or like one -

4. "Pride of sober mean" the reference is to pewter being called formerly the poor man's silver. Reference in last verse to Book of Exodus (in Bible) Chap. 28.

No. 5. Easterly - Too slight perhaps - but I gave it a page number.

Ursula Bethell followed McCormick's suggestion that, of the four poems considered for publication in Day and Night, only "Easterly" should be omitted.

57. The reference given is insufficient to identify the third poem. The fourth poem is "Grey Day", Day and Night, p.10.

4. A CHECKLIST OF URSULA BETHELL'S UNPUBLISHED POETRY MANUSCRIPTS

(1) Completed Poems

- "The Ancient" A.ms. 1 p. (Bethell's hand in ink)
 Title: The Ancient
 First line: Beside a small brook
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1924-28]
 Contents: Manuscript of poem, 8 stanzas of 8 lines each.
- "Aspirations" A.ms., 1 p. (Bethell's hand in ink)
 Title: Aspirations
 First line: I don't want to be neat like my Effie
 Collation: 1 ~~sheet~~ of letter paper
 Date: [1924-30]
 Contents: Manuscript of poem, 18 stanzas of 4 lines each.
- "Canterbury Willows" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: CANTERBURY WILLOWS. a song
 First line: All the willows, all the willows
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1926-30]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 6 stanzas of 4 lines each, 1 of 6 lines. T.B.P.
- "Cassandra Speaks" A.ms. 1 p. (Bethell's hand in ink)
 Title: Cassandra speaks
 First line: Whereas we gaze at azure skies
 Collation: 1 ~~sheet~~ of letter paper
 Date: [1900-1904]
 Contents: Manuscript of poem, 10 stanzas of 4 lines each.
- "Delay" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: DELAY
 First line: Though September be in, the golden sun has forgotten how to shine;
 Collation: 1 ~~sheet~~ of letter paper
 Date: [1924-30]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 1 stanza of 8 and 1 stanza of 4 lines. 1 emendation in ink.
- "Ditty, About a Bellbird" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: DITTY, ABOUT A BELLBIRD.
 First line: You are listening to your own notes
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1932]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 2 stanzas of 9 lines each. Author's note "Silly thing might do for a song". Entitled "The Bellbird", in the Turnbull Library Collection.

- "Easterly"
 Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 First line: EASTERLY. Cashmere Hills.
 Collation: Sharp scimitar, the curving sea
 Date: Half-sheet of typing paper
 Contents: [1930-33]
 Carbon copy typescript of poem, 13 lines.
- "Effervescences for
 Effie. No. 2"
 Title: A.ms. 1 p. (Bethell's hand in ink)
 First line: Effervescences for Effie. No.2
 Collation: We love our Cot and our Croft,
 Date: 1 sheet of typing paper.
 Contents: [1931-34]
 Manuscript of poem, 4 stanzas of 4 lines each.
- "Financial
 Depression 1931"
 Title: T.ms. 2 p. (black ribbon)
 First line: Financial Depression, 1931.
 Collation: Poverty, Saint Francis' spouse,
 Date: 2 sheets of typing paper
 Contents: 1931
 Typescript of poem, 14 stanzas of 6 lines
 each; 4 corrections in ink.
- "For Sister Janet"
 Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 First line: FOR SISTER JANET.
 Collation: Unbroken stillness lay all night upon
 Date: the heavens
 Contents: 1 sheet of typing paper
 [1930-34]
 Typescript of poem, 4 stanzas of 6 lines
 each, 1 of 8; 3 corrections in ink.
- "Goodnight! ..."
 Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 First line: [GOODNIGHT! . . .]
 Collation: Good-night! I am putting out my light."
 Date: Half-sheet of letter paper
 Contents: [1934-40]
 Typescript of untitled poem, 3 stanzas of
 3 lines each, 1 of 4 lines.
- "Happy Thought"
 Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 First line: HAPPY THOUGHT.
 Collation: I made alive with senses five
 Date: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Contents: [1930-34]
 Typescript of poem, 8 stanzas of 4 lines
 each.
- "Morning, July 23.
 1932"
 Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 First line: MORNING, JULY 23, 1932.
 Collation: Now that our sovereign from the east
 Date: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Contents: [1930-34]
 Typescript of poem, 9 stanzas of 4 lines
 each; 7 corrections in ink.

- "Of Michael, our
Cat ..."
Title: A.ms. 2 p. (Bethell's hand in ink)
[Of Michael, our Cat ...]
First line: Of Michael, our cat, we are persuaded
Collation: 2 *sheets* of letter paper
Date: [1924-28]
Contents: Manuscript of untitled poem, 5 stanzas of
varying lengths totalling 40 lines.
- "Pedigree Pup"
Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
Pedigree Pup.
First line: You are a little white puppy,
Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
Date: [1926-34]
Contents: Typescript of poem, 6 stanzas of 4 lines
each; 4 corrections in ink.
- "A Parcel for Me!"
Title: A.ms. 1 p. (Bethell's hand in ink)
[A Parcel for Me]
First line: A parcel for me!
Collation: 1 *sheet* of letter-paper
Date: [1900-04]
Contents: Manuscript of untitled poem, 24 lines.
- "The Plea of
Weathered Rocks"
Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
"The Plea of Weathered Rocks"
First line: Arthur passed me for correct,
Collation: 1 *sheet* of note-paper
Date: [1932]
Contents: Typescript of poem, 8 lines. (Cf. Appendix
2, "The Language of Poetry".)
- "The Publick Baptism
of an Infant"
Title: T.ms. 2 p. (black ribbon)
The Publick Baptism of an Infant. (H.B.A.B.
Dec., 21. 1930).
First line: On a day of blue sky, and light following
breeze
Collation: 2 sheets of typing paper
Date: [1930]
Contents: Typescript of poem, 9 stanzas of 4 lines
each; 5 corrections in ink.
- "Spectacle"
Title: A.ms. 1 p. (Bethell's hand in ink)
Spectacle
First line: It is disaster to the young lambs
Collation: 1 half-sheet of note-paper
Date: [1924-29]
Contents: Manuscript of poem, 8 lines; 2 corrections
in ink. Another untitled manuscript copy
of this poem also exists.
- "Stanzas ..."
Title: A.ms. 1 p. (Bethell's hand in ink)
Stanzas, for framing and placing inside
a wardrobe
First line: When, Briggs, attired by PALMER'S hand,
Collation: 1 *sheet* of note-paper
Date: [1900-04]
Contents: Manuscript of poem, 7 stanzas of 5 lines
each, 1 stanza of 6 lines; 1 correction
in ink.

- "'Tis Love, Tis Love,
the Stars reply,"
Title: T.ms. 1 p. (red ribbon)
First line: [Tis Love, Tis Love, the Stars reply]
Collation: Tis Love, Tis Love, the Stars reply,
1 sheet of typing paper
Date: [1930-34]
Contents: Typescript of untitled poem (intended as
2nd section of "At the Lighting of the
Lamps"), 5 stanzas of 4 lines each.
A second copy in blue carbon also exists.
- "To an Old Grey
Town ..."
Title: A.ms. 2 p. (Bethell's hand in ink)
First line: [To an Old Grey Town ...]
Collation: To an old grey town would come magisters,
2 sheets of note-paper
Date: [1928-34]
Contents: Manuscript of untitled poem, 3 stanzas of
8 lines each.
- "To Dr. T.Z. Koo"
Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
First Line: To Dr T.Z. Koo.
Collation: We were assembled, Countryman of Confucius,
1 sheet of typing paper
Date: [1926-34]
Contents: Typescript of poem, 2 stanzas of 5 lines,
1 of 6 and 1 of 9 lines; 1 emendation
in ink.
- "Vale"
Title: T.ms. 1p. (purple ribbon)
First line: VALE
Collation: Farewell now my garden
1 sheet of typing paper
Date: [1924-27]
Contents: Typescript of poem, stanzas of 3, 2, and 4
lines respectively; 1 correction in
pencil. T.c. "54" also in pencil.
- "A Valediction"
Title: A.ms. 1 p. (Bethell's hand in ink)
First line: A Valediction
Collation: Poet, your passage was to me
1 half-sheet of note-paper
Date: [1928-34]
Contents: Manuscript copy of poem, 3 stanzas of 5
lines each. A second, untitled, copy
of the poem also exists.
- "Very Early"
Title: T.ms. 1 p. (red ribbon)
First line: VERY EARLY
Collation: Waking upon the first bird-call to a sharp
white moon.
Date: 1 sheet of typing paper
[1930]
Contents: Typescript of poem, 2 stanzas of 8 lines
each.

(2) Drafts of Uncompleted Poems

"All the way down
the hill"

Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
[ALL THE WAY DOWN THE HILL]
First line: All the way down the hill
Collation: 1 *sheet* of letter paper
Date: [1928-34]
Contents: Preliminary typescript draft of
untitled poem, 13 lines.

"The earth is
flowering bright"

Title: A.ms. 1 p. (Bethell's hand in ink)
[THE EARTH IS FLOWERING BRIGHT]
First line: The earth is flowering bright
Collation: 1 *sheet* of letter paper
Date: 1924-30
Contents: Preliminary manuscript draft of untitled
poem, 10 lines.

"Easterly"

Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
Easterly
First line: Sharp scimitar, the curving sea
Collation: 1 *sheet* of note-paper
Date: [1924-30]
Contents: Intermediate typescript of poem, 13 lines;
various corrections and emendations in
pencil.

"July 19. 1904"

Title: A.ms. 1 p. (Bethell's hand in ink)
July 19. 1904
First line: Cousin Doff, I greet you well!
Collation: 1 *sheet* of large letter-head paper
Date: 1904
Contents: Preliminary manuscript draft of poem, 210
lines; many emendations and corrections
in ink.

"The log overturned
and the boulder
dislocated"

Title: A.ms. 1 p. (Bethell's hand in ink)
[The log overturned ...]
First line: The log overturned and the boulder dislocated
Collation: 1 *sheet* of note-paper
Date: [1924-30]
Contents: Preliminary manuscript draft of untitled
poem, 7 lines

"O you tropical
climbing plants"

Title: A.ms. 1 p. (Bethell's hand in ink)
[O you tropical climbing plants]
First line: O you tropical climbing plants -
Collation: 1 *sheet* of letter paper
Date: [1924-29]
Contents: Intermediate manuscript draft of untitled
poem, 20 lines; several corrections
and emendations.

- "Of sparks must we speak ..."
 Title: A.ms. 1 p. (Bethell's hand in ink)
 [Of sparks must we speak ...]
 First line: Of sparks must we speak, not of sparking-plugs
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of note-paper
 Date: [1930-34]
 Contents: Preliminary manuscript draft of untitled poem, 2 stanzas of 8 lines each.
- "Spring & Summer"
 Title: A.ms. 1 p. (Bethell's hand in ink)
 [Spring & Summer]
 First line: Spring & summer
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of note-paper
 Date: [1924-30]
 Contents: Preliminary manuscript draft of untitled poem, 7 lines.
- "A Story before Tea"
 Title: A.ms. 2 p. (Bethell's hand in ink)
 A Story Before Tea
 First line: And now little Billy, & now little Bess,
 Collation: 2 sheets of typing paper
 Date: [1924-30]
 Contents: Intermediate manuscript draft of short verse drama, 33 lines; various emendations.
- "Thus my imaginings..." A.ms. 1 p. (Bethell's hand in ink)
 Title: [Thus my imaginings ...]
 First line: Thus my imaginings. Thus the notes distilled
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of note-paper
 Date: [1930-34]
 Contents: Manuscript draft of poem intended as Section 3 of "At the Lighting of the Lamps", 25 lines; several corrections and emendations.
- "To a Bell-bird trying over its notes"
 Title: A.ms. 2 p. (Bethell's hand in ink)
 To a bell-bird trying over its notes
 First line: Invisible musician, to thine high myrtle bower
 Collation: 2 half-*sheets* of note-paper
 Date: [1932]
 Contents: Intermediate manuscript draft of poem, 24 lines; various emendations and corrections. 2 other drafts of 28 and 34 lines also exist.
- "Where are the Birds" A.ms. 1 p. (Bethell's hand in pencil)
 Title: [Where Are the Birds]
 First line: Where are the birds
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of letter paper
 Date: [1930-34]
 Contents: Intermediate manuscript draft of untitled poem, 8 stanzas of 4 lines each; various emendations in pencil and ink.

(3) Drafts of "By the River Ashley".

- Section 1. "It was the river, the river. We played there,"
41 lines: as published (Section 1, C.P. 107)
- Section 2. "That bridge from the city, that was Waimakariri,"
20 lines; published as Section 5, C.P. 110).
- Section 3. "Under the schoolroom window"
28 lines; unpublished.
- Section 4. "THE RANGIORA SHOW."
28 lines; unpublished.
- Section 5. "Voices at the back door after dark."
9 lines; unpublished.
- Section 6. "'Poor Mr. So-and-So' - a familiar phrase. It
had a friendly sound."
13 lines; unpublished.
- Section 7. "Of late when I saw the cruel moon"
28 lines; unpublished.
- Section 8. "The cliffs and bays of long herbaceous borders"
26 lines; unpublished.
- Section 9. "Our neat back-yard, a pleasant place indeed,"
48 lines; unpublished.
- Section 10. "A vignette. That's what they liked"
22 lines; unpublished.
- Section 11. "The smell of matipo. Clusters of people all
about the church"
30 lines; unpublished.
- Section 12. "Lament for those who never in their childhood
knew"
28 lines; unpublished.
- Section 13. "Grey thousands, grey thousands,"
29 lines; unpublished.
- Section 14. "The new inhabitants of the poultry-yard"
12 lines; unpublished.
- Section 15. "Parakeets" "Plenty of peaches to eat"
46 lines; not part of published sequence,
but published separately.
- Section 16. "A day in town - Ah, to be sure,"
31 lines; unpublished.
- Section 17. "Back from the seaside! which alternative"
40 lines; unpublished.

5. A CHECKLIST OF THE BETHELL PAPERS IN THE ALEXANDER TURNBULL LIBRARY.

Apart from Ursula Bethell's own collection of her manuscripts it is probable that the most significant collection held elsewhere is that in the Turnbull Library, Wellington.

The bulk of this collection comprises her poems and letters sent to J.H.E. Schroder at a time when he was editing the literary page of the Christchurch Press.

The Turnbull Collection comprises:

(1) MS. Papers 148 (J.C. Anderson): 29A

Correspondence re. N.Z. Book Week, 1936.

Christchurch, 4 January, 1936, U.B. to J.C.A. Offers a copy of From a Garden in the Antipodes.

28 January, 1936. J.C.A. to U.B. Comments on U.B.'s book;

24 January, 1936. J.C.A. to U.B. Comments on poems: "I like your lines to the hills - the smooth and rounded Port Hills, and the wilder craggy mountains in the Burke Pass verses ... I like your vocabulary; I am unlearned in dress fabrics, but I seem to fancy 'these tussocked hills have the texture of paduasoy.'"

30 January, 1936. U.B. to J.C.A. A short note replying to the above.

(2) qMS. BETHELL, Mary Ursula.

Letters and poems, 1931-45.

From MS. Papers 280 (J.H.E. Schroder)

Letters and poems sent to J.H.E. Schroder.

21 July, 1931. Expresses her thanks for his review in the Christchurch Press⁵⁸: "you are the first reviewer who ... appears to hear and see things as I did when writing..." (The letter accompanied a copy of From a Garden in the Antipodes which Ursula Bethell signed and presented to him).

58. "Trivia", 18 July, 1931.

- 25 November, 1931. Ursula Bethell returns some books which he had lent her. Comments "The association is that Mrs. Henry Head is the 'Ruth' of the Garden..."
- 19 December, 1931 Commenting: "I thought poetry in the Press was for honour and glory ..."; I received a cheque with "surprise and satisfaction ...". "... I have just tinkered these two, and a triviati ... Of course the bellbird, just now, listening to its own note, is beyond words. I'm not sure that you like these neozelanderies -" Asks for return of any rejections "for my dud collection. That forest and glacier went to my head."

The poems enclosed are likely to be "Rock Crystal", "In the Forest" and "The Bellbird". See below:

- 29 July, 1932 Comments: "... if you would like to print the little bit called 'Decoration' I don't mind and if so now's the time - the same weather conditions etc. have recurred." The same letter makes reference to a piece "... about which I must consult a scholar."
- 15 September, 1932 Discusses books, book-reviewing, literary figures and Taoism.
- 17 November, 1932 Giving her impressions of Akaroa: "... Tired of E.H. I have just put another signature but if you should print, put E.H. if you wish! ... I am told that Akaroa means 'Long Harbour'."
- 30 December, 1932 Discusses D'Arcy Cresswell's opinions of her poetry, Schroder's reviews and domestic matters.

Envelope has a note typed by Schroder. "Two typed poems 'In a Hospital': 'Christmas Eve', 'Improvements': By a Conservative".

- 8 June, 1933 Discussing her activities in World War I, M.H. Holcroft, her interests and "Autumn Afternoon" - "... one thing I recollect about 'Autumn Aftn' is having discussed with a friend who [se] husband is a General Carrier whether one could put a lorry into poetry, and taking this opportunity..."

Envelope has note by Schroder: "Autumn Afternoon" and "The Long Harbour", June 8, 1932(?)".

- 28 July, 1933 An invitation to tea.
- 8 September, 1933 Forwards a letter from Arthur Mayhew; asks for the return of a group of poems.
- n.d. "Here's this 'Rainy Morning'. Not very nice. Discusses Holcroft's writings.
- 15 September, 1933 "Here is a fair copy of another request piece. It's getting near the season named: ..." Informs Schroder that she is rewriting "Spring on the Plains" and asks him to destroy his copy.
- 9 August, 1933 Discusses Holcroft, Cresswell and her own poems.

Envelope has note by Schroder: "Long Harbour" variant, August 9, 1933.

Ursula Bethell's comment: "This verse of 'The Long Harbour' I did not finish for Press. D'A.C. wished to substitute it for 2 others - makes a better sequence." (i.e., fourth verse of final draft of "The Long Harbour".)

- 23 September, 1933 Comments: "Herewith the fruit of phrenzy - a drive out on the plain yesterday helped ... verse 2, line 6 I had 'bloom - bright', the machine wrote 'gloom - bright' ...". The same letter reveals her identity.
- 27 September 1933 Discusses her poems "Spring Day" and "Rainy Morning"; also discusses Music and Holcroft.

Note on envelope by Schroder: "refs "Spring Day", 'Rainy Morning'".

- 23 October, 1933 Remarks: "The enclosed was my birthday ..."

Note on envelope by Schroder: "'Anniversary' corrected 17 September, 1933 with 'Anniversary' (for my birthday) October 23:33."

- 6 December, 1944 Discussing poems held by Schroder, current affairs and Press leaders.
- 28 January, [1934] A note accompanying another poem.
- Letter annotated "Limitation". Envelope has a note by Schroder: "January 28, [December 28?] 1933, with 'Limitation'."
- 7 March, 1934 Comment on personal and domestic matters.
- 22 August, 1934 Discusses Cresswell's suggestion that she publish poems in a further booklet. "I simply can't bear that Nigel Playfair has died. Too many people are dying. I have stayed too long in the Antipodes ...".
- Schroder's accompanying note: "... with 'Short Story'..."
- 17 September, 1934 Asks for advice on proposed booklet for private circulation. Includes an emendation to her poem "Anniversary 1933".
- Schroder's note: "... correcting 'Anniversary', October 23:33.
- 23 September, 1934 Expressing her thanks for his advice on the publishing venture and gives her thoughts on future publications. Describes her view of a home for books - "... the whole in the charge of a sort of Lady Abbess ...".
- 9 December, 1935 Advises Schroder that she is looking for a flat.
- 9 December, 1936. Sends Schroder a copy of Time and Place. "I hope you will think that the Caxton Press deserves praise for it."
- Annotation on letter: ["Removed from Mr. Schroder's copy of Time and Place."]
- 27 May, 1937 Sends Schroder a copy of From a Garden in the Antipodes. Discusses the printing errors in that and in Time and Place.

- 2 June, [1939] Informs him that Glover wanted the Caxton Press to bear the expense of bringing out her book.⁵⁹ Feels that she cannot use her old pseudonym "E.H."
- 19 October, 1939 Sends a copy of her new publication, Day and Night. Requests a review by A.W. Stockwell. The book "... does not resemble the Garden tho' written in the same place & time..."
- Annotation on letter: [Removed from signed presentation copy of Day and Night]
- 1 November, 1939 Expresses her thanks for Schroder's radio advertisement of Day and Night.
- 11 November, [1939] Expresses her thanks for a copy of the broadcast review and indicates her pleasure that a "landscape approach" was taken. Discusses her childhood in Canterbury.
- n.d. Discusses Akaroa and the need to conserve the bush.
- n.d. [1937] Expresses her thanks for a review⁶⁰ of Time and Place. Discusses Helen Simpson.
- n.d. (a postcard of Akaroa): "... and those pines are where "The Long Harbour" was mostly written."

NOTE: The following section provides some information about the poems forwarded to Schroder:

"Rock-crystal" Typescript; no emendations, but signed "E.H." in pencil. (see letter 3 March, 1932).

Section I: "Routine - galled, dull, by many years cumbered."

Section II: "Humanity has ever found it comfortable."

Another copy is also found in manuscript form with a variation in the number of lines in each stanza and a variant version of Stanza 4.

59. i.e., Day and Night

60. "Modern Verse", Christchurch Press, 25 November, 1937.

"In the Forest"

Ms. copy with footnote: "Waiho Gorge, March, 1932." See letter, 3 March, 1932.

First line: "Think you not, lone traveller, for an hour withdrawn"

"The Bellbird"

Manuscript copy of poem with emendation. See letter, 3 March, 1932.

First line: "You are listening to your own notes,"

"Improvement / By a Conservative"

Typescript with emendation and handwritten footnote which reads: "This indiscretion was a propos of our Cashmere beautification and might have gone into the correspondence then if ready - It's still in the rough and must stay so. It may amuse you - Is there any hope of saving the alders that are left?" (See letter, 30 December, 1932).

First line: "They are elbowing Beauty out of our borders here."

"The Long Harbour"

Manuscript copy signed "Wanderer". See letter, 17 November, 1932, 8 June, 1933.

First line: "There are three valleys where the warm sun lingers".

"In a Hospital,
Christmas Eve"

Typescript copy. Third stanza deleted with a footnote: "Noticed possibly unorthodox expressions and deleted verse."

First line: "They bring the lily and the rose,"

["Effervescences
for Effie. No.2."]

Typescript copy with no title. A manuscript note at the beginning is obliterated by the binding of the collection.

First line: "We love our cot and our croft,"

Schroder's envelope note records the receipt of "The Long Harbour" and "Autumn Afternoon".

"Spring Day on the Plain"

Three typescript versions with handwritten emendations. Signed "E.H." See letters, 9 August, 1933, 7 and 27 September, 1933.

Third version with only one minor emendation seems to be the final draft.

First line: "Captured and gentled,
harnessed to use of man;"

"Anniversary"

Typescript with no emendation. Signed "E.H." in pencil with pencil notes by Schroder at bottom: "Corrected; Sept 17, 1934". See letters, 23 October, 1933, and 17 September, 1934.

First line: "It was day of young
October, wakened"...

The correction is contained in Ursula Bethell's letter:

First version, stanza 4:

Beyond those trees, the morning's open
 portals,
And the great ocean's sharp, responsive
 blue
I saw, and the snow - beautiful Kaikouras,
And snowy Tapuaenuku ...

Second Version:

Beyond those trees, the morning's
opened gateway
and the great ocean's sharp, responsive
blue
I saw, and snow-silvered ranges,
and snowy Tapaenuku -

"Short Story"

A manuscript version. See letter,
23 September, 1934.

First line: "Unto the Soul the Body
cried:"

"A Song"

Typescript with one handwritten emendation and signed "E.H." Pencil notes in an unknown hand, probably directions for a printer. See letter, 22 August, 1934.

First line: "All the willows, all the
willows"⁶¹

61. i.e., "Canterbury Willows".

Untitled Poem

[The Piano-Tuner] In this manuscript copy there are three sections, two of which are headed "Section 1".

First line: Section 1 (i): "From attic bed of indisposition"

Section 1 (ii): "But the hand of History, herself unaccustomed."

Section II: "Hear how the happy piano-forte tuner."

"Limitation"

Typescript signed "E.H." See letter 28 January, (28 December?), 1933.

First line: "Time, tacit wardress of our earthly paradise,"

(3) Misc. MS Papers 1029: Typescript with manuscript corrections of "At the Lighting of the Lamps". n.d. Presented in 1961 by G.T. Alley.

(4) Misc. MS Papers 1020: Letters and Poems addressed to E.H. McCormick, 1938-44.⁶²

Undated [1940?] Her liking for cats. Helen Simpson.

Undated [1940?] Her reply to McCormick's criticism.

19 May, 1944 Informing him of her illness.

62. Cf. Appendix 2, "Extracts from a letter to E.H. McCormick".

PART TWO

E I L E E N D U G G A N

1894 - 1972

EILEEN DUGGAN

1. AN OUTLINE OF HER LIFE AND WRITINGS

Eileen May Duggan was born in the little farming community of Tua Marina, Marlborough, on the 21st May, 1894. Her parents, John Duggan of Kilcummin and Julia (née Begley) of Castle Ireland, had emigrated from County Kerry during the eighteen-seventies.

Her primary education was completed at the Tua Marina school and her secondary schooling at Marlborough Girls' College.

At a later time she described the setting of her childhood:

To be asked to write of Tua Marina is almost like a request to write of self, so much are we still rooted there, those of us whose bents took us from it; and, though most of our lives may have been spent elsewhere, that feeling, instead of waning, grows stronger ... It would be folly to claim that Tua Marina was Utopia, but it had the grace of minding its own business and that greater grace which diffused, would save the world - neighbourliness. There men, with mutual respect, regretted to differ and agreed to forbear. They might be scattered to the four winds but they had that tradition to remember, that and another. A man was judged there, not by his wealth, but by his deeds. There were in the community men of substance but there was no boast of it, nor could they be distinguished from their fellows by their standard of living. The village school was a democracy in embryo.¹

Eileen Duggan left Tua Marina for Wellington where she began her university studies at Victoria University College, graduating with First Class Honours in History in 1918. She was awarded the Jacob Joseph Scholarship in the same year.

1. "Tua Marina Memories", A History of the Tua Marina School Seventy-eighth Anniversary, 1871-1949 (Edited by A.M.Hale), Tua Marina School Committee, 1949, p. iv-v.

Apart from a year's teaching at Dannevirke High School, a year's lecturing at Victoria University College and even briefer teaching periods at Marlborough Girl's College and St. Patrick's College, Wellington, she devoted the rest of her life to her writing.

Because of her retiring disposition and increasing ill-health Eileen Duggan spent much of her life in virtual seclusion in Wellington. She died there in November, 1972.

Her earliest published poems appeared in the N.Z. Tablet in 1917, and it was also the Tablet which produced her first small collection in 1921.²

In his preface James Kelly³ defined her allegiances: "[The poems] are the products of a heart and mind inspired by two forces - Catholicism and a love for Ireland ..."⁴. Predicting a successful literary career for the young poet, Dr. Kelly concluded his remarks with a note to his Irish readers: "I would like to say that this book is a pledge to them that our Greater Ireland beyond the seas has preserved the traditions of the old land and that young hearts beat here, as warmly as at home, for the cause that is dearer than life to us all".⁵ For much of her life Eileen Duggan's work was to be admired for the wrong reasons.

Nonetheless, the lyric form of these early poems is handled with such ease and refinement that it was clear to her first readers that verse was to be her natural medium. "A.E." paid tribute to the unexpected lyric quality of the poems when he wrote:

2. Poems, Dunedin, N.Z. Tablet Co.

3. Rev. James Kelly, Ph.D., Editor of the N.Z. Tablet.

4. Poems, p. [3]

5. *ibid.*

Colonial poetry as a rule has something of the crudity of a new civilisation, but Eileen Duggan writes with a delicacy and a subtlety which one expects rather in civilisations which are old, where emotions have become refined through long generations of culture.⁶

Russell was at fault in not admitting that a new literature should be marked by a distinctive quality rather than the outworn conventions of a parent literature.

In the course of the next few years her reputation was to be sponsored by another kind of literary tradition. As early as 1925 a critical article had announced "I believe ... that poetry in the grand style has been written in New Zealand. Particularly I think it is to be found in Eileen Duggan".⁷ The critic was referring to the rhetoric of nationhood which was attracting her even at this time.

New Zealand Bird Songs⁸ appeared in 1929. In a prefatory note the author disclaimed any pretensions to their status as literature: "They are simply rhymes on their birds for the children of our country"⁹. The very unpretentiousness of her foreword demonstrates that the author was wiser than many of her supporters, for some reviewers greeted the collection with an embarrassing parade of parochial sentiment and romantic fervour which left her vulnerable to the kind of satire which Denis Glover was to indulge in, at her expense, in "Explanatory".

Jessie Mackay, for example, did her little service by heralding the poems with an extravagant nationalistic ardour:

When is a land new and unsung joined at last to
the classic shores that men have immemorially laurelled,
loved and died for? Truly this New Zealand of ours
was loved and died for at least as far back as the
glory of Bannockburn. But laurelled she could not be
till her flowers and her birds were born into the
company of rose and amaranth, raven and dove in the
songs of her own children.

6. The Irish Homestead, 1923. A typewritten copy of the review can be found among Eileen Duggan's papers.

7. Fortune, R.F., "On New Zealand Poetry", The New Nation, 2 No. 5, 1 June, 1925, p.21.

8. Wellington, Harry H. Tombs.

9. *ibid*, p [9]

That is why the elect reader takes up with a kind of reverence Eileen Duggan's book of bird songs ... This young-old book is for the children of no other land, for the grown children who, glory be! never can grow past the bird notes and the winged dreams of island childhood.¹⁰

New Zealand Bird Songs owed "... its piquant lyric grace to the attuned soul of a New Zealand girl to whom New Zealand is magic and love complete."¹¹ and seemed to hint at the birth of a new literature. Its publication led Jessie Mackay to long further for

... a book that cannot long be delayed, a book in which Eileen Duggan takes to her wings in dead earnest, with a sun upon them that is of New Zealand and more than New Zealand, that world-wide glow for which the iridescence of one loved and ancient land and one loved new land has kindled a flame that honours all.¹²

Although her hope was not to be fulfilled for another eight years, our reading-public still had the Bird Songs, "... a book of joy to lay up in heart's lavender for ever".¹³

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the Bird Songs was, as an American critic¹⁴ implied, its metrical experiment. For the rest it was merely a group of children's verses by an accomplished poet, and the excessive adulation which greeted its appearance spelled out danger, for a new movement was already stirring in New Zealand letters. In Auckland, unhonoured and isolated, R.A.K. Mason had already been writing his powerful, grim verses for seven or more years, and in the very year in which New Zealand Bird Songs appeared A.R.D. Fairburn, a brash young man with hopes of a literary career, had written to her to prescribe a cure for the ills afflicting New Zealand writing:

10. "New Zealand Bird Songs; Eileen Duggan's Poems", Christchurch Times, 11 January, 1930, p. 13.

11. *ibid.*

12. *ibid.*

13. *ibid.*

14. Kavanagh, Paul, in his review of New Zealand Bird Songs, Commonweal, XIV, 16 September, 1931, p. 466-67.

... I have solved that ever-recurring question, "What's wrong with New Zealand Literature?". Full stomachs, my friend, full stomachs. The political economy of this country is so arranged that while the intelligent^{zia} are never allowed to become rich, their bellies are kept replenished with good food-stuffs. They are deprived of the only urge which might lead to their creating a literature. I'm going to get a job as a stoker on a steamer as soon as I can. Like everybody else in this Paradisaal isle, I'm getting soft. It's different for you womenfolk, though. You seem to be able to work on a full stomach.¹⁵

Although its full effect was not to be realised for some years, the new movement was eventually to transform the New Zealand literary scene, and Eileen Duggan's reputation was to be the greatest casualty left in its wake. Yet during the greater part of the 'thirties, apart from ominous rumblings by left-wing journals like Phoenix and Tomorrow, and occasional acrid remarks by two young men named Glover and Curnow, it did not appear likely that her literary stature would be challenged. Consequently it seemed quite suitable that in the New Year Honours of 1937 she should be awarded the O.B.E. for services to literature.¹⁶

In its editorial the Dominion remarked that "Letters are honoured by the inclusion of Miss Eileen Duggan, the sweet music of whose verse has won her an assured place on the scroll of New Zealand writers."¹⁷ Another newspaper located her on the international scene: "Walter de la Mare, and John Masefield seem to stand out, among poets of today, as assured of immortality. Close to them is Eileen Duggan ..."¹⁸.

The poet herself did not seem greatly impressed by this honour to her person:

15. Undated letter to Eileen Duggan [1929]

16. Other honours accorded to her during her lifetime included:

Life Membership, N.Z. Branch of P.E.N.
 Honorary N.Z. representative to the English Branch of P.E.N.
 Honorary Membership of the International Mark Twain Society.
 Honorary Fellowship of the Royal Society of Literature.
 Honorary Membership of the Academy of Living Catholic Authors.

17. 1 February, 1937.

18. Christchurch Press, 13 February, 1937, p. 17.

A Government that fosters the liberal arts in an age of money-changers exalts the ideals of its country. I honour it most because it rewards in that list men and women who have helped suffering humanity. One day of their services is worth years of mine.¹⁹

Readers of her first English publication, Poems,²⁰ would scarcely have agreed.

In his Preface Walter de la Mare acknowledged a new talent: "Here is a revelation in its own kind and degree of a personal energy and vision, of a unique feeling expressed in renewed language"²¹.

In a private letter to the poet de la Mare attempted to explain his reaction on first seeing the poems:

It is comparatively easy to criticise & to comment on whatever relates to literary craftsmanship; but how hard it is to communicate one's love & delight in anything; & particularly in poetry. Reasons one has, & excellent ones; but even when they are producible they will hardly convey the secret.²²

He concluded by prophesying the growth of her literary reputation: "My only wish was to be of some small service to [the poems] , and years hence any such notions will amuse your readers. They won't be in need of introductions".²³

De la Mare's assurances were not to be fulfilled, for at that time the tide of literary fashion in this country was changing. The young Modernist poets and critics were becoming more vocal. A year before the appearance of Poems Robin Hyde had commented implicitly on this:

19. Extract from a typescript copy of an address given by Eileen Duggan to the Wellington Branch of P.E.N. at a celebratory function held in her honour.

20. London, Allen & Unwin, 1937

21. *ibid*, p. [8] -[9]

22. 8 November, 1938.

23. *ibid*.

I love your poems: about all I've seen, and I wish I could see more. Some day soon you will bring out another book. For you and for me too (please) there is a goodish Eastern proverb: "The dogs bark, the caravan passes."²⁴

Robin Hyde, too, had misread the signs of the times, and her own literary reputation was to decline along with that of Eileen Duggan.

There were few signs of such a decline in 1937. In fact overseas reviewers accorded her Poems an astonishing reception and bestowed on her a literary reputation which no other New Zealand poet has equalled. Reference to a selection of the reviews published in New Zealand and overseas journals will give some idea of her sudden and widespread fame.²⁵

New Zealand Poems²⁶ was published in 1940 in honour of New Zealand's Centennial Year. It is even more determinedly nationalistic than her previous publications, but she was too refined an artist to express this sentiment clumsily. The reviewer of the Times Literary Supplement believed that "... apart from the opening 'Centenary Ode' and one later 'Ode', Miss Duggan celebrates the genius of her country less by direct address and acclamation than by expressing with loving insight the minute particulars of its life."²⁷ and that "... the theme of country never ceases in her hands to be a personal experience ...".²⁸

In 1951 occurred that "remarkable achievement"²⁹ to which McCormick drew attention - the publication of a group of poems notable for their sparseness and severity. In response to More Poems Walter de la Mare wrote to her, claiming to have found in

24. Letter to Eileen Duggan, 12 April, 1936

25. cf. Appendix 1, "A Selection of Reviews of the English and American Editions of Poems"

26. London, Allen & Unwin, 1940, New York, Macmillan, 1940.

27. "Poetry", Times Literary Supplement, 24 February, 1940, p.103.

28. *ibid.*

29. McCormick, E.H., New Zealand Literature; A Survey, London, Oxford, 1959, p. 107.

them "... a gallantry and faithful forthrightness and undauntable spirit ..."³⁰

Shocked by the war-deaths of many she had known and saddened by the condition of the post-war world, she recorded her reactions in passionate and intelligent verse stripped of its earlier pretentiousness. Through these late poems speaks the vates, one who has earned the right of utterance, proclaiming the sadness of an age when "... a battering wind / Drive [s] on the saddest autumn ever known."³¹

Three years after the publication of More Poems Alan Mulgan wrote to her - "A magnificent quotation from Yeats - do you know it - about the state of the world. It begins:

Turning and turning in the widening gyre³²
The falcon cannot hear the falconer ..."

Undoubtedly she knew it in her very bones. Yet tragedy did not move her to despair. Instead it was subsumed into that "positive little universe"³³ which de la Mare had discovered in 1937.

In beguiling the critics and making this late change in her established poetic practice she had fulfilled the prophecy which he had made in his first letter to her: "I know that you will never do else than go your own way in poetry and may it always be with rejoicing."³⁴

30. 7 July, 1951.

31. Duggan, Eileen, "End of Autumn", More Poems, p.7.

32. Letter, 12 September, 1954.

33. Introduction to Poems, 1937, p. [10]

34. Letter, 8 November, 1938.

2. A DESCRIPTION OF SELECTED POETRY MANUSCRIPTS

Eileen Duggan's considerable manuscript collection is found in some disarray in the house in Imperial Terrace, Kilbirnie, where she spent the last forty years of her life.

There are multiple copies of many of her poems - most of which reveal minor variations. The changes are not often significant but they do reveal her devotion to the craft of poetry. Such changes seem dictated by her wish to find stronger verbs, alternative adjectives and more formal rhythmical patterns. To the despair of her friends and editors she continued to tinker with the texts of her published poems, rarely appearing satisfied with them even when they seemed to have reached a final form.

Because of the nature of her illness most of her papers are found in typescript form, although emendations and corrections were done by hand.

Although there are very few preliminary drafts of her poems it should not be assumed that these did not exist, since poets are unlikely to keep their earliest workings. Nonetheless, we have the evidence of her published work to demonstrate that she relied on a sudden inspirational impulse. In "Booty", for example, she asks :

Let song come always at me and not to me
And, coming, let it plunder, burn, and flay,
For beauty like heaven by violence is taken
And the violent shall bear it away. 35

An unpublished poem, "Art", reveals her evaluation of poetry:

Only that counts in which there is
 Nothing foregrudged, withstood.
 Only that lasts which bolted through
 And which was signed in blood.

Moreover, in the course of a conversation with the author she stated that one of her best-known lyrics, "The Tides Run Up the Wairau" came to her in its final form, without a single alteration being required in the draft.

In view of the surprising late change in her writing which is revealed in More Poems there remained a hope that the purification of her art would have continued beyond that time, and that some valuable poems ~~might~~ have been left in manuscript. A study of the collection reveals, however, that she did not write a great deal after 1951, and that the late poems in manuscript simply parallel her published poetry.

In fact it must be concluded that her unpublished poems generally do little more than support the conclusion that one reaches as a result of a consideration of her published work.

Among her manuscripts there are to be found several poems which illustrate her deep affection for Ireland which she often depicts as a suffering woman:

We fling our love to you across the far dim spaces,
 We knock upon your heart and cry, "Oh, mother, mother,
 mother!"
 You answer "Who are ye at all? I do not know your faces
 Ah let me be and cry no more your 'mother, mother, mother'
 How can my heart reach to you that is breaking in the west?"³⁶

On occasions, in prose and poetry, her patriotism expresses itself through the traditional argument for the union of Ireland. "The Old Answer" makes that point:

36. "Ireland: Easter 1923".

You asked me: - "How is Eire?"
 Who never loved her soul.
 I answered: - "You mean Ireland".
 That country is a whole.

Deep in her heart is Ulster,
 Of her provinces the fourth -
 Her four green fields she called them
 Could she forget the north?

In "A Plea for the Women", as in several of her published poems, Eileen Duggan formulates an equation between the sufferings of Ireland and the Passion of Christ:

Your women, Ireland, stand beside you in your passion,
 And though to alien eyes they stand alone,
 They feel the clouds grow heavy with the angels,
 Hear in their clash the anger of the angels,
 Foresee the futile stone.

Patrick MacDonogy has quoted Padraic Fallon to the effect that Irish poets "... tend to make of every common street a via dolorosa ..." ³⁷. Eileen Duggan's poetry, too, often falters when she resorts to this explicit and commonplace analogy instead of relying on the tensions which are implicit in the events themselves.

More commonly, her manuscript poems record a twin allegiance to the old land and the new:

Sometimes some of the younger generation
 Will meet in the New Zealand way as strangers,
 And sit, remote and poised in word and gesture.

.

Until some guarded mouth forgets its caution,
 And, laughing, lets slip out some homely saying,

.

Some easy knot of words that they brought with them,
 From that green land whose schools were in the hedge-rows. ³⁸

37. MacDonogy, Patrick, "Romantic and Irish Poetry" in A New Romantic Anthology, ed. Steffan Schimanski and Henry Treece, London, The Grey Walls Press Ltd., 1949, p.119.

38. "Encounters".

At that relaxed moment the strangers may discover that
 "A mother or a father came as shipmates / Or danced together
 in a Kerry kitchen",³⁹ and from their instinctive friendship
 arises "a race's resurrection."⁴⁰

Another poem, "Ireland", describes the tension which arises
 from that dual allegiance:

And so it comes that I was Janus-hearted
 When I remembered Ireland.
 And why did you, my father
 Since you had to leave Kilcummin
 In ancient Kerry,
 Why, out of all the world, choose thus-wise?
 You could not speak her name
 Without a drag that broke me.
 Why did you choose a colony for haven?
 This is my land. Its air ripens
 To a dust like grape-down.
 Oh, blind, I would discern that through my eyelids!
 And yet your songs aroused old rage, old anguish;
 Forever race and sod struck spurs within me
 And only death I thought could truce that combat.
 Why did you choose a land of your oppressor's?
 But, if your own so wrung your faithful withers
 You would not grudge your child a country.

Before long the setting of her poems was not an imagined
 Ireland, but a vividly realised New Zealand:⁴¹

Not alone you grieve, my dear, all the things of nature,
 Flax, mint and stone have sorrowed with you too,
 Children and men are linked with flowers and swallows,
 Earth, air, and flame remember her with you.

As the poem draws to its conclusion, however, it peters
 out in feminine whimsy:

Mourn not for her who now forgetteth mourning
 Cease from today your grief and sorrowing,
 She who on earth went pattering over Autumn
 Now threadeth daisies in the meadow of the Spring.

39. *ibid.*

40. *ibid.*

41. I have heard of a New Zealand soldier who carried a copy of
 her poems with him throughout the war of 1939-1945 to
 remind him of his home-land.

Another early elegy which is partly vitiated by its poeticisms is "Remembrance":

My eyes are blinded still though Spring has lit the hills,
My ears are deaf although the air cries out with bills,
I dare not lend my sense to any tree in flower,
'Twould be my fear if I forgot you for an hour,
You might creep back to me on some unmemoried day,
And knock, and knock, and knock, and find my heart away.

For all that, the poem shows undoubted lyric skills.

An untitled poem shows the plainness which Eileen Duggan could employ when she used some variation of the ballad stanza. It also reveals her habitual practice of employing an extended analogy:

Direct your will at mine.
Aim without pity.
'Twas said of old he had the fight
Whose spear first pointed at the city;

Or who beforehand shot
An arrow at his goal
I am worth neither arrow nor spear
But fore-aim at my soul.

" Direct Your Will " is an example of that personal religious lyric to which she so often resorted in her writing.

Much less effective are the descriptive landscape pieces like "Kowhai" and "The Acolyte" which are typical of the New Zealand Georgianism of the 'twenties and 'thirties - that unfortunate phase in our literature. The first-named poem illustrates the type of verse which the young Modernists, Curnow and Glover, repeatedly rejected:

Flower of flower and gold of gold,
Tell use whence that glory came
Did your young heart burn and burn
Till it broke in flame?

Among her published and unpublished work there are many examples of this kind of romantic exercise - poems which do not generate any kind of poetic pressure.

Yet, simultaneously, she was able to write simple, personal lyrics. "Absence" is such a poem:

You know that I was always tonguetied after absence
And would draw back and wait
Until the stiffness broke, the strangeness melted
As they would soon or late
Into the older sense of warmth and sureness,
Of passing through a gate.

I have to live with folk to be of easy manner,
To give them all or none
And every parting is another dying
A dousing of my sun
Except with you who mocked at moat and drawbridge
And took my towers in one.

Suppose that I should live to be an old, old woman,
And humble like the old
What if with you when I at last shall meet you
I could not still make bold!
Ah ⁴² what if you were gay and like a bee in winter
I dull and odd and cold!

Among her manuscripts there are also a number of poems which she chose not to include in her 1929 collection, New Zealand Bird Songs. "The Riro-Riro" is one of these:

Which is the saint, the little self-forgetter?
Sing high here, low there, low.
Whistling from a warm throat through the days grow wetter,
Riro, riro, riro, riro, riro, riro, ro.

As kind and as brave as a small attic mother,
Making a place for a waif,
You elbow your own to make room for another,
And the cuckoo's bold orphan is safe.

"The Riro-Riro" scarcely illustrates the merit of the best of the poems in New Zealand Bird Songs. The slightness of the subject-matter of that collection cannot disguise the lyric skill of the poet, although a number of the published poems, too, are limited by fancifulness. Where this is controlled the poems reach out beyond their child audience and ~~create~~ the intangible, twilight world one encounters in de la Mare's poetry.

42. Continually throughout her poems one finds examples of "fill-in" syllables at the beginnings of lines. Drafts of her poems reveal her concern for an opening iambic foot.

Such poems are examples of Eileen Duggan's interest in a national literature. Shortly before she left New Zealand, Robin Hyde wrote a letter which implies a similar concern:

You and I, though so utterly different in route and all manner of chosen means, work out to somewhat the same equation in the end - but I am clay and you are china. (I don't mean "fragile porcelain", I mean good honourable china, and for that matter, clay not so bad either, though very streaky.) But often you say the thing I wish I had said. Anyhow, bless you, as I used indeed to bless you in the days when I first got about the Wellington Public Library, and your first book of poems was the best book of poems there.

I'm taking your New Zealand Bird Songs in my pack ...⁴³.

Another poem existing only in manuscript which has the dream-mood of the best of Georgian lyric poetry is "Two Towns":

Two towns in one town,
Flagged both with stones,
One full of living men,
One full of bones.

That town of live men
Keeps its streets clean;
No trailer on the stones,
No grass between.

That town of dead men
Lets the boughs blow,
Lets silver urchins bud,
Lets daisies grow.

Yet all the quick folk,
When their days pass,
Sloven of boughs will be,
Slattern of grass.

All those astir now,
Tidy and blind,
End under silver buds,
Feckless and kind.

43. Letter, 16 January, 1938.

Despite the success of such writing the best of the manuscript poems dating from the 'thirties are the more personal lyrics. Yet even then words and metaphors are often used too extravagantly, as in "Tide":

Such as I am, I owe all to grief,
Though from the debt I cower,
It drew my spirit into tides
That, flood or neap, have power,
A stream is slow to the moon at full;
Its waters reason like the mind;
It is the salt that makes the sea
And the soul is of its kind.
Salt water feels. It is instinct
And by the moon is stretched apart.
Better a swell of agony
Than an untided heart.

Many of the lyrics in manuscript display Eileen Duggan's religious pre-occupations and reveal that "brooding inward attentiveness" and "delight in visible nature"⁴⁴ which Patrick MacDonogy has isolated as a two-fold feature of Irish romanticism. Too frequently, however, she invests the New Zealand landscape with a moral significance.

The least successful of her manuscript poems are the pietistic pieces. This weakness is sometimes compounded by a curious indulgence of metaphor, as in "Revelation", or "The Long Way Round":

I know too well the right-of-way to you
That short-cut to your tenderness
The lane that saves so many sore-heeled miles -
And knowledge salts an old distress.

I can, of course, be humble under praise,
With all the world upon my side,
But, under blame, I buy defiantly
New linings for my cloak of pride.

And let it stream far out upon the wind.
When I can learn to fold it in.
When I forbear to strike an attitude,
I may my solvency begin.

44. "Romanticism and Irish Poetry", l.c., 119.

Pride is my coin. It spends itself with ease.
 And my soul's draft is overdue -
 Had I enough humility in hand,
 I need not trudge the miles to you.

Yet, for all its faults, this last poem is almost redeemed by its atmosphere of country wisdom.

Occasionally, in a purer lyric form, she was able to avoid these excesses. Having read her "And At the End", the young, iconoclastic Fairburn felt impelled to remark that this was " ... one of the greatest things I've ever read. The last two lines are - well, explosive. You know what I mean by that ..." ⁴⁵, while the sceptical R.A.K. Mason was moved to copy "A New Zealand Christmas" into one of his notebooks. ⁴⁶

"Illumination", a poem which she chose not to publish, has something of the lyric quality and restraint of the best of her religious writing:

The leaf was dark until a wind
 Flung it against the living sun
 And all the little cells behind
 Were lit up one by one
 Till like a winter inn it shone
 And worldly starlings tried to sing
 For green alight's a lifting thing
 Lord, if my green has power of fire,
 Fling me against Your love or ire
 That I may give You out again
 In one green luminous amen.

Although she usually writes best when working within a limited frame of reference, the domestic detail of some of these poems sometimes degenerates into whimsy as in "The House-Scourge", or cannot bear the weight of significance which she would impose upon it. That would be the fault of "Frost":

45. Letter to Eileen Duggan, 19 May, 1929.

46. This notebook is in the possession of Mrs. Dorothea Mason.

On my bare self fell the frost,
 First as a dew;
 Then each drop set silver
 And rimed through.

Though the sod freeze into stone
 Deep waits the vine,
 Saving her sap alive.
 For the wine.

Let my heart strike deeper still.
 No cold above,
 Not even polar frost,
 Should bite love.

Among her published work, however, there are poems which successfully mirror the daily living of little Tuamārina in the south. In their commonplace detail skilfully refined by a considerable lyric art, poems such as "The Bushfeller" and "The Blacksmith's Wife" express, indirectly, a nationalistic sentiment which is more genuine than that found in her explicitly laudatory pieces.

Quite commonly, Eileen Duggan uses various modifications of the ballad stanza to recreate her lost world. Of this practice she has remarked:

The ballad, personal, emotional, local even, is the natural approach to national expression. Already there are words in our ordinary speech, which are particularly our own, and, unlike slang, would have a lexicographer's sanction. Good ballads are like tallow dips, pioneer precursors of a better light ...⁴⁷

Some of the best of her New Zealand poems belong to the difficult genre of "folk" poetry which she refined into a new art. No New Zealand poet before her had succeeded in making such poetry appear less than factitious, and only Denis Glover has done so since. Among the manuscript poems "The Bush Boy" will serve to illustrate this mode of writing:

47. "New Zealand in its Literature", America, LVIII : 355,
 15 January, 1938.

My mother says to me at night and morning
 "Son you are fretting, do you think I do not know?
 "Your head was drooping down when you crossed to the dairy
 "What can it be that is troubling you so?"

How can I tell her I am young and I am lonely
 Is all my life to be cow, sheep and horse
 Felling the rata and stumping the paddocks
 Fencing and ditching and grubbing the gorse?

She is a widow her heart would be broken
 She is so proud of this farm she has made
 I was a child when my father was taken
 Her old hands are rough from the axe and the spade.

I'm twenty years old and I've not seen a city
 She'd tell me to go and not give a sign
 But I must stay for she'd work on without me
 Oh! where in the world is a mother like mine?

Eileen Duggan also used the folk form to encompass her religious interests. Among her published work "Epiphany", "A New Zealand Christmas" and "The Farmer's Wife" are examples of the manner in which she merged her nationalistic and religious interests. "A New Zealand Folk Song" will serve as an unpublished example of this genre:

When they round up the steers in the valley
 And each man boasts of his whip and his horse,
 I think of one who was first with his tally.
 I would of course.

When they went mustering in the back country,
 Oh how it broke him to give up a sheep!
 Though he is gone where no flood can surprise him
 I cannot sleep.

If he lay here and heard them all moving,
 No weight of earth would hold him I feel.
 He would be there with them, whistling and swearing,
 Dogs at each heel.

France has her own, poor land, to weep over,
 What is one more to her there in the sod?
 But the one more is her all to a mother.
 Isn't it, God?

In the best of such poems she gauges with perfect accuracy the extent to which she can use colloquial language and rhythms without allowing her verse to degenerate into "folksiness".

An earlier manuscript poem, "The Emigrant's Sea", strives for a more literary effect within the same stanza tradition:

Down the brig-ladder, rocking and breezy,
She came with her bundle to try the new land,
With its brave little houses of cob and of peasy,
Its strange, glossy trees and its hummocks of sand.

Though the heels of her thought might shy and might baffle,
Her body must hanker for freedom no more
Blinkered down like a colt to the road and the snaffle,
Its skin flowing morning in every pore.

She saw the white market, the trundle, the wonder,
The hither and thither when winds hold their fair,
The sky in its pangs give way unto thunder
And the distance look back in its wimple of air.

And she thought that the land was a lady of leisure,
But the water, like her, a servant must be,
At somebody's beck, without resting or pleasure,
No spring ever breeds daffodils on the sea.

And beauty, infretting behind her soul's lining,
A power, in dismay, that her tongue could not tell
Worked in her, unloved, and hectored, and humble
A sorrow as rich as a pearl in a shell.

Eileen Duggan's nationalistic inclinations were given further expression in those pieces in which she became "imaginatively intimate with the Maoris".⁴⁸ These are more especially found in her 1940 publication, New Zealand Poems.

"The Flight", a poem in manuscript, serves as an example of this mode of writing. It is neither better nor worse than her published poems of the kind:

48. "Poetry" [a review of New Zealand Poems], Times Literary Supplement, 24 February, 1940. p.103.

Wailing, the tribe replied: "'Tis the old destined doom.
 Men, let us go!" And Pomare turned where
 The Rodney's spar-light gleamed
 By Matiu. "That is our ship!"
 And a sigh ran through the tribe
 Like air through flax, like water through raupo.
 By a feint they seized the craft
 And five hundred strong
 They went as freight
 Where their forebears rode as sailors.
 Three days of thirsting
 With their tongues black,
 Three days of watching
 With their eyes seared,
 And then that coast-line
 Aiee! Safety!

The flight belongs to the same tradition as "A Maori to Mary" and "Peace of Hina"⁴⁹ and co-exists alongside Roderick Finlayson's prose narratives of Maori life. Her Maori poems should be regarded as part of her attempt to discover the formula for a native literature.

The last poems she wrote in her lifetime were not concerned with establishing a New Zealand literature. More Poems is a final spirited statement by an intelligent, passionate woman. An English reviewer considered the whole trend of the volume as

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49. Edward Tregear (1846-1931) may well have interested her in composing this poem. In 1925 he wrote: "As to the legend of Hina, I enclose a copy of the story, the only one yet published: it is from J. White's Ancient History of the Maori - a very scarce book. I am afraid it is a very bare and bloodless account of a very beautiful human soul. I wish you were going to use it instead of some un-named "literary man" - I should like to see the way your pure and graceful imagination would clothe the naked old story; there are a dozen different viewpoints ... I love Hina and she is very real to me. You said that I told the story 'with great tenderness' - part of that is my affection for my dream of her, and part the memory of those who gave me her neck-pendant which (if you remember) I wore as my mascotte. Part of the time I have kept you waiting was while searching for memoranda of the legend as I got it from Hone Kukutai of the Ngati-tipi, but it is lost I fear in the endless deeps of 50 years accumulation of papers - gone down the whirlpool to oblivion". (Letter to Eileen Duggan, 22 March, 1925).

a departure from myth and towards a bare, personal utterance:

"Much of her work is a distillation from pastures not so much as hinted 'at. There is no background. Nothing of New Zealand. Even her symbolic bees and butterflies belong to no particular hemisphere."⁵⁰

There are among her manuscripts a number of poems which redefine the tragic experience of those war- and post-war years:

This was all he asked of life,
The right to be alone,
To fly out of the body there,
Though he drop like a stone.

Air was release to him -
Lightning its one mishap.
The world kicked back beneath his heels
Was dearer as a map.

In the unacred sky,
Who had no steer to brand,
Who never owned a blade of grass
Has died to keep the land.

In the unpeopled air,
Far from earth's angry rind,
Who could not bear his fellows close
Has died to save his kind.

Too young to vote on laws,
He died up there elate.
For those with eyes like animals
That have no say in fate.⁵¹

"Fosterage" is another poem which belongs to this same late tradition:

Buds winter-blasted
All take oath
Their green shall enter
Next year's growth.

O my dear country,
In war's hold,
Make of my body
Your leaf-mould.

50. Eden, Helen Parry "A Noble Blaze", London Tablet, 29 September, 1951, p.13.

51. "The Young Recluse".

All her writing life, in virtual isolation, she attempted to be faithful to the demands art put upon her. At times she fell victim to a fashionable Georgianism - the blur of sentimentality and a gratuitous withdrawal from reality. On other occasions she was a victim of the partisan spirit of her friends who misrepresented her literary achievement while confirming her in bad writing habits. Nor did the rising school of young New Zealand poets and critics recognise the nature and extent of her achievement.⁵² A manuscript poem would seem to indicate that this did not trouble her:

Let others have the fame
 We have no passion for it.
 We make no claim
 For pride or profit -
 Not for profit, God knows,
 Nor for fame,
 Had we such woes.

.

We had the work,
 And asked no quittance -
 We had the work.
 Brothers, the sowing
 Was worth it then and now;
 The heavy going,
 The stones beneath the plough,
 Were light for love's sake.
 Understand
 That we take
 Only this for our own -
 This alone -
 Above old and new,
 Above you and you,
 We loved,⁵³ we were famished for the land.⁵⁴

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52. A.R.D. Fairburn, for example, was gratified that he did not have to review More Poems for Landfall. He wrote to Brasch: "Thank you for relieving me of the obligation to abuse a spinster. La Duggan's verse has never been much more to me than a distant mewling; I haven't read this latest book, but should be surprised to find it much different in texture and feeling from what went before it". (Letter to Charles Brasch, 10 September, 1951, as found in "Letters to Brasch 1946-57", Micro Ms. 144; the Turnbull Library collection of Fairburn's letters). cf. also Appendix 2, "Eileen Duggan and Allen Curnow; A Matter of Principle", and Appendix 3, "Eileen Duggan's Opinions on Nationalism in Literature".

53. Quite probably no other New Zealand poet has loved New Zealand with the same degree of feeling. In August, 1970, quoting the lines:

For if I held the freehold of this land
 From Cape Reinga to Oreti Beach
 I could not feel that it was more my own.

("Invasion", New Zealand Poems, p. 30).

Eileen Duggan told me that her preference was for her poems about New Zealand.

54. "Dit L'Ecrivisse Mère ...". [sic]

3. APPENDICES

(1) A Selection of Reviews of the English and American Editions of "Poems".⁵⁵

The Times Literary Supplement reviewer was enthusiastic, if restrained. Under the heading "A Voice from a New Country" he wrote: "Miss Duggan is a real poet because her words are always her own and at her best she has an absolute control of them".⁵⁶

Percy Hutchison, the chief literary critic of the New York Times, was moved to write:

Though she lives in the Antipodes, New Zealand to be exact, Eileen Duggan, as a poet, knows neither time nor space. I do not recall having encountered her work before. But it is exceptional ... Today one mourns the death of William Butler Yeats. Our guess is that had this superlative Irish poet lived to see these poems by Eileen Duggan he would have gone on record on her behalf as one carrying on with brilliancy the unquenchable lyric torch. Eileen Duggan is a poet with whom the future will have to reckon.⁵⁷

The American edition of Poems was an astonishing success. Its reviews were, without exception, laudatory, and the collection went to three editions.

The reviewer for the Boston Evening Transcript ranked Poems with " ... not more than three other really excellent books of poetry within the year",⁵⁸ while the Saturday Review of Literature stated that she " ... deserves New Zealand's homage as the best poet that country has produced in her time."⁵⁹

55. Two English and three American editions were published.

56. Cited in "Eileen Duggan's 'Rare Vital Glitter'", the Advocate, Melbourne, 28 November, 1940.

57. "Eileen Duggan's Poems", New York Times, 16 April, 1939.

58. "New from Down Under", 25 January, 1939.

59. "Poems", 5 August, 1939.

The Kansas City Star remarked censoriously: "Poetry in recent years often has been distinguishable from prose only by its typographical appearance, a distinction of questionable value. Miss Duggan's work, if printed as prose, would remain poetry. Its warmth and ecstasy, melody and verbal exactness, lend it the recognisable trademark of genuine poetry."⁶⁰

Yet another reviewer saw her work as resembling "... the numerous 'magazine poets' of her sex in the days before the vogue of the dot-and-dash style, with this important difference: that her bright and flashing moments are not achieved by rhetoric, but distillation of magic."⁶¹

The Fort Wayne Tribune-Gazette also seized the opportunity to attack the modernists:

Figuratively confronted by tons of printed matter, as we all are, it is refreshing and exhilarating to read poetry in which words are sparingly and judiciously used, when not only the exact meaning of each word is considered, but nobility of thought and beauty of expression are sought-for goals. For we are not speaking of the bizarre stuff published by modern verse-mongers, but of the work of sincere writers who are artists in their writings as they are in their hearts...⁶²

Texans who read the Waco Sunday Tribune-Herald were reminded that it was a paper which seldom "... gave space to airing opinions about poetry ..." since "Few men and women ... attain the sanctity of pure poetry."⁶³ In Eileen Duggan's writing, however, there was some quality "... that raises her above the general run of modern poets and sends her soaring into realms reached only now and then in a generation."⁶⁴

60. "The Bright Stamp of Genuine Poetry", 18 February, 1939.

61. Shaemas O'Sheel, "The Pure Poetic Impulse", New York Herald-Tribune, 26 February, 1939.

62. Clara Porter Yarnelle, "Book of the Week", 23 April, 1939.

63. "Poems from New Zealand", 12 February, 1939.

64. *ibid.*

Equally favourable reviews were published in the Hartford Times,⁶⁵ the Christian Science Monitor,⁶⁶ the Sauk County News,⁶⁷ Our Sunday Visitor,⁶⁸ the Savannah News,⁶⁹ the Abbey Chronicle,⁷⁰ the Queen's Work,⁷¹ the Melbourne Herald,⁷² and the Melbourne Advocate.⁷³

One New Zealand journal thought of 1938 as "The Golden Year for New Zealand Literature": "Refreshing in the last year or two has been the work of the vigorous younger men such as R.A.K. Mason, Denis Glover, A.R.D. Fairburn, D'Arcy Cresswell and others ... But ... Eileen Duggan is doing for us what Katherine Mansfield did in the arena of the short-story. Her fame is now world-wide."⁷⁴

Predictably, it was the Catholic journals which accorded her poetry its warmest reception. Katherine Bregy predicted that:

Readers who have singled out the sometimes homely but always haunting lyrics by Eileen Duggan scattered during the past few years in our Catholic magazines will seize upon this little collection with something like excitement. It is undoubtedly one of the poetic events of the year - and best of all, a rich prophecy for the years ahead.⁷⁵

Another American Catholic journal, Spirit, responded suitably:

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- 65. M.L.S. "Delicate Lyrics with Irish Spirit ...", 11 February, 1939.
 - 66. "Poet of New Zealand", 25 March, 1939.
 - 67. August Derleth, "A Book a Week", 16 February, 1939.
 - 68. "Eileen Duggan", 19 March, 1939.
 - 69. O.D.E., "Book Review", February, 1939.
 - 70. Jane Judge, "A Book of Poems by Eileen Duggan", 26 February, 1939.
 - 71. Alfred Barrett, "New Zealand's Poet", February, 1939.
 - 72. "An Authentic Lyric Voice", 26 February, 1938.
 - 73. P.I.O'L., "A Native in the Air of Faith", 3 March, 1938.
 - 74. O.N. Gillespie, Railways Magazine, 13 No. 4, 1 July, 1938, p.15.
 - 75. "Review of Poems by Eileen Duggan", Commonweal, XXVIII : 193, 10 June, 1938.

Miss Duggan is a lyricist who unfailingly strikes universal overtones, a lover of nature who is never tempted to dwell upon its superficial characteristics, a religious poet whose contact with spiritual realities is expressed in action rather than by assertion, and a realist who cannily refuses to be trapped into rendering verse catalogues. She is the subtle harmonist deriving her effects from proper alternations of silence and sound rather than from floods of music.⁷⁶

Alfred Barrett preferred Eileen Duggan's poetry to that of "... flamboyant and inferior talents ..." such as Edith Sitwell's, and believed that she was "... in the ideal position to challenge her contemporaries."⁷⁷ A sentence in a later review makes explicit an attitude which was implicit in his earlier remarks. Under the title "Eileen Duggan's Positive Universe", he wrote: "It is no longer necessary to be awed by the pretensions of poets who thunder from the Left."⁷⁸

The same reviewer referred to her O.B.E., "Of course the pleasant accident of her being a Catholic had nothing to do with her recognition as the laureate of New Zealand. But at a time when it is the fashion to follow communist poets like Auden and Spender ... it is reassuring for Catholic collegians to be in a position to study a worthy successor of Louise Imogen Guiney and Alice Meynell."⁷⁹

A critic for the Dublin Review had the last word:

The whole book is one delightful procession of astonishments. I am not given to extravagant praise ... If only she will now attempt to use her multitudinous gifts towards some epic of her native New Zealand, in sustained imagery, there can be little doubt but that she will rank at least as the greatest woman poet of this age.⁸⁰

76. "Review", V:89, July, 1938.

77. "Eileen Duggan, New Zealand's Poet", America, LVII:189, 29 May, 1937.

78. America, LVIII : 573, 19 March, 1938.

79. "Eileen Duggan, New Zealand's Poet", l.c.

80. Egerton Clarke, "The Greatest of this Age", October, 1938.

As a result of the publication of Poems in the United States by Macmillan in 1938 an "Eileen Duggan Society" was set up with branches in several states.

Apart from the actual literary merit of her work there appear to be three main reasons why Poems was greeted with acclaim. In the first place it allowed Catholics or expatriate Irishmen to indulge in some flag-waving; secondly, many readers would have been attracted by the fact that her conservative philosophy provided some sort of counterweight to the left-wing poets of the 'thirties who were dominating the poetic arena; and, thirdly, her traditional lyric skills convinced readers and reviewers alike that "real" poetry, meaning non-modernist poetry, continued to be written.⁸¹

None of these enthusiastic supporters did her a service. From this time on she was bound to be considered a sectarian poet, while, at the same time, the acclaim she received might well have confirmed her in a number of literary faults. She was undoubtedly an accomplished lyric poet but that was all, and it was unfortunate that her verse was adopted by others to fight an extra-literary crusade.

Note: I have been unable to include a number of page references in this source-list because my own source was a review book of newspaper clippings, often unpagged, held by Eileen Duggan. None of these newspapers or journals is held in this country.

81. As recently as 1964 this kind of debate was still being conducted. A correspondent to the New Zealand Listener wrote: "It was a pleasure to read in your pages ... some lines by Eileen Duggan, who was and is a genuine New Zealand poet - one of the very few. The lines are musical but subtle with meaning ... in direct contrast to most of the 'nothing' stuff printed in local periodicals nowadays." (Margaret Galloway, N.Z. Listener, 1288:9, 5 June, 1964.

(2) Eileen Duggan and Allen Curnow : A Matter of Principle

In a footnote to his Introduction in A Book of New Zealand Verse 1923-45, Allen Curnow admitted that, despite certain strong critical reservations which coloured his attitude to Eileen Duggan's work, she had yet written a number of poems which he "... wished to include ... and they would have been included if she had not refused permission to reprint".⁸²

Eileen Duggan was not at all sympathetic to the aspirations, political or literary, of the emerging young New Zealand poets of the 'thirties. Her voice might well echo in this reminiscence by Pat Lawlor, one of her most ardent supporters:

... The Curnow clique was born in Christchurch, sired by the then constituted Caxton Press and the literary quarterly "Landfall". They had a godfather in Wellington, the late Sir Joe Heenan, then Secretary for Internal Affairs, a literary man of parts himself and interested in fostering this new school of writers through the department's publications. Joe had the ear of Peter Fraser, then Labour Prime Minister, who also loved mingling with young writers. a [sic] measure of financial help came through some obscure State fund and later, of course, through the State Literary Fund. Mr. Curnow himself was given one of the largest grants in the history of the fund - to develop his literary bent overseas.

So was born a strongly organised core of faintly Leftish young men who ruled out writers who did not engage their sympathies.⁸³

The earliest article of correspondence which I have been able to trace is a reply by Sir Stanley Unwin, the Director of her publishers, Allen & Unwin Ltd., to a letter of hers. He wrote:

82. Christchurch, Caxton Press, 1945, p.25.

83. "Penguin Protest" a typescript copy of a review of the Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse offered by him to the Bulletin and dated 15 March, 1961. Duggan Papers.

Thank you for your letter about Alan [sic] Curnow's anthology. Before its receipt we had already written to Mr. Davies that we should follow your wishes in the matter. We have now written to him, making it quite clear that, as far as any anthologies published in New Zealand are concerned, he should make a point of consulting you before passing the inquiry on to us, and [sic] that if your verdict is in the negative he need not even bother to pass on the inquiry but can give the answer right away. If, however, the anthology is one you approve, the matter should, of course, be referred to us so that we can make the appropriate arrangements. 84

The three letters which follow, written to her by W.F. Alexander, literary editor of the Dunedin Evening Star, reveal both her motive for refusing to allow her poems to appear in Curnow's anthology and the strength of her feelings in the matter:

An hour to spare, the approach of Xmas and two things besides prompt these few lines. I will get in early this time, wishing you the happiest of Xmas and New Years.

The other day I came across one of your letters which [sic] said Allen Curnow was publishing an anthology, but it would contain nothing of yours. "Their N.Z. is not mine". In an unexplained letter, prompted by the fact that his father, Rev. T.M. Curnow (Anglican) my friend from school days, who writes weekly humorous [sic] verses - as good as "Punch" - for us from Kaiapoi, had thought of publishing a selection of his frivolities - deferred till next year - Allen happened to mention his intended work. It is to cover 1924-44 - 15 poets. I replied that, if you were not in it, I thought it would be as much wanting as Alan Mulgan's small book which does not mention him - that was putting it very mildly.

In answer he seemed to leave no doubt that the choice of rejection was yours, not his, and I despaired of having any power to influence it, even if the time itself were not too late.

Assuming that the book will be more than representative of a coterie I am sorry it shd.[sic] be so stultified, and I fancy Curnow's own work has outgrown the coterie restrictions. You will have the satisfaction of the man who said "It is better not to have a monument and to have people ask: 'Why is there no monument to so-and-so'."

Mulgan tells me he left out Curnow because his work had developed during the long time that his (Mulgan's) book was awaiting publication, and because, in a very slight book - and very nice one, I thought, he could not include everybody.

I should like to see a real anthology for Curnow's selected period.⁸⁵

The second letter was written some four months later:

I sent you a small book at Xmas, and did not hear if you got it. I could not think that I had offended.

Eileen Duggan, J.M., Ursula Bethell, Douglas Stewart ... there is no first or last, and the rest follow, despite A.C. and Marris.⁸⁶

It was followed by yet another:

Your letter has relieved my mind. I had become confirmed in the idea that somehow, though I could not guess why, I had offended you, and it was a painful thought.

Nothing else really matters. You were always, and are, completely at liberty not to care for Good King Wenceslas; the verses generally I thought might amuse you, but that was merely as might be, or not.

I should not have dreamed of your visiting the son upon the father; knowing them both, but the father chiefly, I should be hard put to it to name anything, except a literary bent, differing by an age in its manifestations even when, on both sides, these are serious, that they have in common.⁸⁷

85. 3 December, 1944

86. 25 April, 1946

87. 21 June, 1946.

Towards the end of 1948 Allen Curnow asked once again for permission to include her work in his revised edition of A Book of New Zealand Verse:

I am preparing a revised edition of "A Book of N.Z. Verse" for publication by the Caxton Press early in 1949 - the first edition being nearly exhausted. I wonder if you feel able to reconsider your refusal, and permit me to include some of your poems? I hope you will forgive me, at this stage, for not naming the poems I would like to have; I cannot do this until I have re-read.⁸⁸

Eileen Duggan did not wish to oblige the anthologist on this occasion either. Nor was he any more successful in gaining permission to include her work in his Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse (1960). The closing paragraph of his Introduction to that collection reads: "I wished to include some poems by Miss Eileen Duggan, but found, to my regret, that this could not be arranged".⁸⁹

It could not be arranged, simply because her New Zealand was not his New Zealand.

88. Letter to Eileen Duggan, 13 December, 1948.

89. London, Penguin Books, 1960, p.67.

(3) Eileen Duggan's Opinions on Nationalism in Literature.

Among Eileen Duggan's manuscripts are typescript copies of several articles which describe the condition of New Zealand writing.

These articles have been published in American journals, but it is probable that they were never seen by critics in this country. Consequently, reference to them may be instructive.

As early as 1926 she called for a recognition of the self-sufficiency of New Zealand art and literature:

Over here in this Southern outpost it is a weakness with us that everything must have the European hallmark ... Until some European has praised, we mistrust our own judgement. Is it humility that louts us, or slavishness? A little of both ... Our literary judgments are bounded on the north by a conviction that we must wait until Europe has spoken, and on the south by a conviction that we are not old enough yet to sing living songs. Fallacious frontiers!⁹⁰

In a later article she drew a valuable critical distinction between the colonist poets and those of a later generation:

Our first writers have been called the "landscape school" because, confronted with wild scenery, they devoted their energies, in the main, to physiographical rhapsodies. They wrote so many poems on New Zealand that today we are suffering a reaction and later writers have swerved from the descriptive to the subjective.⁹¹

That distinction is an exact one. In a bitter attack upon her work in his Introduction to A Book of New Zealand Verse⁹² Curnow was at fault in not recognising that the best of her poems were the expression of a genuine new poetic voice, and in

90. "The Mind of the Colonies", Catholic World, CXXIII, April, 1926, p. 102.

91. "New Zealand in its Literature", America, LVIII, 15 January, 1938, p. 356.

92. Christchurch, Caxton Press, 1945, p. 24-25, Cf. Appendix 2, "Eileen Duggan and Allen Curnow : A Matter of Principle".

dismissing her lyrics together with the artless rhapsodisings of the many untalented versifiers who abounded earlier this century he compounded his critical error.

Her article then distinguished between the emerging younger poets and the established group of New Zealand Georgians:

There are at present two schools of thought. The one demands nationalism in literature, the other asserts that art is a-national, transcending flags and frontiers; and, as is usual in controversies, both are right in part. No art can be made national by the mere mention of Kowhais and Kiwis, for such terms, if the body of the work is alien, are like the wings that sank Daedalus; but a work that is up-borne by national insight can fly up and on. Our task is to support European traditions with Maori wings. As for the other school that claims its freedom from national influences, the obligations for sod and sky are permanent.⁹³

In his Introduction to the Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse⁹⁴ Curnow found himself able to make an admission which for some reason he could not formulate in his earlier anthology. In the later publication he wrote: "In the earlier part of the present century, poems by Katherine Mansfield, Eileen Duggan and D'Arcy Cresswell, may be said to mark the beginning of a true orientation - away from colonialism and on towards the island nation of the past three or four decades."⁹⁵ He then went on to say, "Whether open or implicit it is this vital discovery of self in country and country in self which gives the best New Zealand verse its character ..."⁹⁶.

Allen Curnow had finally arrived at the position which Eileen Duggan had held twenty-two years earlier. He was then, of course, under attack from yet another generation of poets.

93. "New Zealand in its Literature", l.c.

94. London, Penguin Books, 1960.

95. *ibid.*, p.21.

96. *ibid.*

4. A CHECKLIST OF SELECTED LITERARY MANUSCRIPTS

(1) The Unpublished Poetry Manuscripts in the Duggan Collection

The Duggan Collection contains many drafts and copies of published poems. As they yield only the most general kind of information about her methods of literary composition they are neither discussed nor listed.

Reference to the checklist which follows reveals that Eileen Duggan had a considerable output of poetry and that she was also relatively selective about what she published.

Moreover, it is clear that the poems in manuscript are rarely superior to her published work.

A further point which can readily be established is that she seems to have been able to bring almost all her poems to completion. Among her entire manuscript collection I found only one draft which remained at an early stage of development.

The entries designated as drafts in the following checklist are virtually complete, but they contain corrections in spelling or punctuation or alternative words or phrasings substituted for, or bracketed with, the earlier readings.

| | |
|---------------|--|
| "Absence" | T.ms., 1 p. (purple ribbon) |
| Title: | <u>ABSENCE</u> |
| First line: | You know that I was always tonguetied after absence. |
| Collation: | 1 sheet of typing paper |
| Date: | [1923-28] |
| Contents: | Typescript of poem, 3 stanzas of 6 lines each |
| "The Acolyte" | T.ms., 1 p. (black carbon) |
| Title | <u>THE ACOLYTE</u> |
| First line: | My quiet morning hill |
| Collation: | 1 sheet of typing paper |
| Date: | [1918-21] |
| Contents: | Carbon copy draft of poem, 3 stanzas of 4 lines each. Second stanza deleted in pencil. |

- "Aftermath" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: A F T E R M A T H
 First line: We are conceived of truth and in our marrow
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1945-46]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of poem, 20 lines.
- "Ah, have I ever
 sung?" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: [AH, HAVE I EVER SUNG?]
 First line: Ah, have I ever sung? Can sparrows sing?
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1930-35]
 Contents: Typescript of untitled poem, 17 lines
- "Airman's
 Punctuation" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: AIRMAN'S PUNCTUATION
 First line: Your syntax was as simple
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1940-43]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of poem, 4 lines.
- "An Old Woman's
 Prayer" T.ms., 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: AN OLD WOMAN'S PRAYER
 First line: The rain has come and washed the skies
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1925-30]
 Contents: Carbon copy draft of poem, 36 lines,
 several emendations in ink.
- "Any Lover" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: ANY LOVER
 First line: The moon is smaller than many stars
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1926]
 Contents: Carbon copy draft of poem, 3 stanzas of 4
 lines each; 2 emendations in pencil.
- "Any Sinner" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: ANY SINNER
 First line: Evil is in me for all your brave refuting,
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1926]
 Contents: Carbon copy draft of poem, 2 stanzas of 4
 lines each; 2 emendations in pencil.
- "Art" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: ART
 First line: Only that counts in which there is
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1940-45]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of poem, 4 lines;
 found immediately below t/s of NEW AGE (q.v.)

- "As we; so thou" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: [AS WE: SO THOU]
 First line: As we; so thou,
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1925-6]
 Contents: Typescript of untitled poem, 3 stanzas of 4 lines each.
- "Ballad of Crete" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: BALLAD OF CRETE
 First line: Crete calling
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1942-43]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of poem, 4 stanzas of 6 lines each.
- "Breaking Sky" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: BREAKING SKY
 First line: You may have all other skies. Mine the
 Dane could hold in spell.
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1927-28]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 2 stanzas of 3 lines each.
- "The Bush Boy" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: "THE BUSH BOY"
 First line: My mother says to me at night and morning
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1930-35]
 Contents: Typescript draft of poem, 4 stanzas of 4 lines each; 2 emendations in pencil.
- "Choice of Pain" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: C H O I C E O F P A I N
 First line: The sun is gone behind the little hill
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1930-35]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of poem, 2 stanzas of 4 lines each.
- "Christmas" T.ms. 1 p. (Duggan's hand in pencil)
 Title: Christmas
 First line: In my selfish heart I said
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1925-30]
 Contents: Manuscript draft of poem, 4 stanzas of 5 lines each; several emendations in pencil. Not to be confused with the poem published under the same title in the Marist Messenger.
- "Cindarella" T.ms. (black ribbon)
 Title: CINDARELLA
 First line: Chancing on her name one day
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1926-27]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 30 lines. In a second copy of this poem the first 8 lines are cancelled.

- "Commonality" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: COMMONALITY
 First line: Was it in grief the atoms clung to make our earth?
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1950-51]
 Contents: Typescript draft of poem, 4 stanzas of varying length; corrections in pencil.
- "Confusion" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: CONFUSION
 First line: Something has troubled the birds
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1927]
 Contents: Typescript of 4 stanzas of 5 lines each.
- "Conquest" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: CONQUEST
 First line: The land is not our own. It is a spoil
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1930-35]
 Contents: Typescript draft of poem, 14 lines; several corrections in pencil.
- "Consolation" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: CONSOLATION
 First line: "Ah, why", they cry, the little, mourning mothers,
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1926-28]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of poem, 3 stanzas of 6 lines each.
- "The Contemplative" T.ms. 1 p. (blue ribbon)
 Title: "THE CONTEMPLATIVE"
 First line: My mother said if I awoke,
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1924]
 Contents: Typescript draft of poem, 14 lines; 1 correction in pencil.
- "Creed" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: C R E E D
 First line: Lord, I have gone bare
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1930-35]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of poem, 3 stanzas of 5 lines each.
- "Desolation" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: DESOLATION
 First line: The cold, defeated sod, the few springing heifers
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1930-35]
 Contents: Carbon copy draft of poem, 2 stanzas of 14 and 11 lines respectively; several emendations in pencil.

- "Difference" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: DIFFERENCE
 First line: The thrush out on the willowbough is
 launching ships of glory;
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1926-27]
 Contents: Carbon copy draft of poem, 2 stanzas of 4
 lines each; 1 correction in ink.
- "Direct Your Will" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: [DIRECT YOUR WILL]
 First line: Direct your will at mine.
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1930-35]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of untitled poem,
 2 stanzas of 4 lines each.
- "Dit L'Ecrivisse
 Mère" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: "DIT L'ECRIVISSE MÈRE ..."
 First line: Let others know the fame
 Collation: 2 sheets of typing paper
 Date: [1951-52]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of poem, 3 stanzas
 of 4 lines each.
- "The Doubter" T.ms. 1 p. (purple ribbon)
 Title: THE DOUBTER
 First line: O searcher into mysteries
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1928-29]
 Contents: Typescript draft of poem, 3 stanzas of 4
 lines each; 2 emendations in pencil made
 by Eileen Duggan at a later time.
- "A Dream of
 Judgment" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: A DREAM OF JUDGMENT
 First line: Behind God's shoulder was the sky,
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1930-35]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of poem, 2 stanzas
 of 8 lines each.
- "Dreams" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: DREAMS
 First line: As a tree dreaming before its bark opens,
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1925-30]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of poem, 2 stanzas
 of 8 lines each.
- "The Emigrant's
 Sea" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: THE EMIGRANT'S SEA
 First line: Down the brig-ladder, rocking and breezy,
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1930-33]
 Contents: Carbon copy draft of poem, 5 stanzas of 4
 lines each.

- "Encounters" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: ENCOUNTERS
 First line: Sometimes some of the younger generation
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1923-25]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 22 lines.
- "Falling Star" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: FALLING STAR
 First line: A fiery fissure in the night
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1945-50]
 Contents: Typescript draft of poem, 3 stanzas of 4 lines each. 4 corrections in pencil.
- "The Farming Nation" T.ms. 1 p. (purple ribbon)
 Title: THE FARMING NATION
 First line: I am glad that New Zealand lives by cattle.
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1929-30]
 Contents: Typescript draft of poem, 4 stanzas of 4 lines each; several emendations in pencil, including 1 cancelled line with alternative reading.
- "Fidelity" T.ms. 2 p. (black carbon)
 Title: F I D E L I T Y
 First line: Old Paddy, his bun hat just slanted,
 Collation: 2 sheets of typing paper
 Date: [1930-35]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of poem, 35 lines
- "The Flight" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: THE FLIGHT
 First line: Wailing, the tribe replied "Tis the old destined doom.
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1937-40]
 Contents: Typescript draft of poem, 16 lines; several emendations in pencil.
- "Fog" A.ms. 1 p. (Duggan's hand in pencil)
 Title: Fog
 First line: You came with silent stride
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1930-35]
 Contents: Manuscript draft of poem, 16 lines; several corrections in pencil.
- "For the Women" A.ms. 1 p. (Duggan's hand in ink)
 Title: For the Women
 First line: If like a bird that feels its blood go strange
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1938-39]
 Contents: Manuscript draft of poem, 12 lines; several emendations in pencil.

- "Fosterage" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: FOSTERAGE
 First line: Buds winter-blasted
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1943-45]
 Contents: Typescript draft of poem, 2 stanzas of 4 lines each; 1 correction in pencil.
- "Freedom" A.ms. 1 p. (Duggan's hand in pencil)
 Title: Freedom
 First Line: How innocently faithful
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1945-48]
 Contents: Manuscript draft of poem, 16 lines; several emendations in pencil.
- "Frost" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: F R O S T
 First line: On my bare self fell the frost,
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1948-51]
 Contents: Typescript draft of poem, 3 stanzas of 4 lines each; 3 emendations in pencil.
- "Fulfilment" A.ms. 1 p. (Duggan's hand in pencil)
 Title: Fulfilment
 First line: Earth can know calm but not that stillness.
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1930-35]
 Contents: Manuscript of poem, 7 lines.
- "Granuaile" T.ms. 1 p. (purple ribbon)
 Title: G R A N U A I L E
 First line: After long years she walked a certain street,
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1929]
 Contents: Typescript draft of poem, 19 lines; 1 emendation in black type.
- "Griselda's Song" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: GRISELDA'S SONG
 First line: The moon is smaller than many stars
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1926]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 3 stanzas of 4 lines each; T.r. "48" in pencil. Same text as "Any Lover" (q.v.).
- "The House-Scourge" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: THE HOUSE-SCOURGE
 First line: No dust-grain, self-invited,
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1925-30]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of poem, 6 stanzas of 4 lines each.

- "The Idealist" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: THE IDEALIST
 First line: Sometimes within an hour of fiery leaven,
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1927]
 Contents: Carbon copy draft of poem, 3 stanzas of 4 lines each; 2 typed corrections. This poem should not be confused with that of the same title in Poems (1937) p.50.
- "Illumination" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: ILLUMINATION
 First line: The leaf was dark until a wind
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1930-35]
 Contents: Typescript draft of poem, 11 lines; 2 corrections in pencil.
- "In Memoriam" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: IN MEMORIAM
 First line: The camp-fires of the tented line of Pharaoh,
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1930-35]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of poem, 2 stanzas of 4 lines each.
- "In Memoriam" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: IN MEMORIAM (Brian McNamara)
 First line: Never for you the ageing chill of twilight
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1940-44]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of poem, 2 stanzas of 4 lines each.
- "Incompatibility" T.ms. (black ribbon)
 Title: INCOMPATIBILITY
 First line: "In honesty how could I,
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1930-35]
 Contents: Typescript draft of poem, 2 stanzas of 7 lines each; 1 emendation in pencil.
- "Incompatibility" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: INCOMPATIBILITY
 First line: Though you should scorn her all your days
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1929]
 Contents: Carbon copy draft of poem, 22 lines; 2 deleted.
- "Influence" T.ms. 1 p. (purple ribbon)
 Title: INFLUENCE
 First line: Evil is in me for all your brave refuting,
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1929-30]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 2 stanzas of 4 lines each.

- "Intrusion" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: INTRUSION
 First line: This is such delicate joy,
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1925-30]
 Contents: Typescript poem, 12 lines.
- "Ireland" T.ms. 2 p. (Black carbon)
 Title: IRELAND: EASTER, 1923
 First line: We fling our love to you across the far dim
 spaces,
 Collation: 2 sheets of typing paper
 Date: [1923]
 Contents: Carbon copy draft of poem, 4 stanzas of 5
 lines each on first page, 2 of 5 on second;
 1 correction in blue ink
- "Ireland" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: IRELAND
 First line: And so it comes that I was Janus-hearted
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1924-25]
 Contents: Typescript draft of poem, 18 lines;
 several emendations in pencil.
- "Irony" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: I R O N Y
 First line: Not hawk, not leopard is ironic.
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1930-35]
 Contents: Carbon copy draft of poem, 8 lines; 3
 corrections in pencil.
- "Kowhai" T.ms. 1 p. (blue ribbon)
 Title: KOWHAI
 First line: Flower of flowers and gold of gold,
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1924]
 Contents: Typescript draft of poem, 4 stanzas of 4
 lines each; 2 corrections and 2
 emendations in pencil.
- "Lament" A.ms. 2 p. (Duggan's hand in pencil)
 Title: [LAMENT]
 First line: I lament our lost eagle
 Collation: 2 sheets of typing paper
 Date: [1940-45]
 Contents: Early pencilled draft of untitled poem,
 42 lines (13 cancelled); many emendations
 and corrections; list of proper names and
 rhyming-words in right-hand margin.
- "A Late Spring" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: A LATE SPRING
 First line: Spring has come late this year
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1926-27]
 Contents: Typescript draft of poem, 21 lines; 1
 correction in pencil.

- "The Long Way Round" T.ms. 1 p. (Black carbon)
 Title: THE LONG WAY ROUND
 First line: I know too well the right-of-way to you
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1925-30]
 Contents: Carbon copy draft of poem, 4 stanzas of 4 lines each; several emendations and corrections in pencil.
- "Lullaby" T.ms. 2 p. (blue carbon)
 Title: LULLABY
 First line: Sleep! My arms are warm and hollow,
 Collation: 2 sheets of typing paper
 Date: [1928-29]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of poem, 3 stanzas of 8 lines each.
- "The Marist Brothers" T.ms. 1 p. (blue ribbon)
 Title: THE MARIST BROTHERS
 First line: Your works are quiet and your ways,
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1924-25]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 9 stanzas of 4 lines each.
- "Mars" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: MARS
 First line: Have you, fiercest of stars,
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1930-35]
 Contents: Typescript draft of poem, 5 stanzas of 4 lines each.
- "Mitigation" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: MITIGATION
 First line: Oh far beyond the fiercest prayer
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1930-35]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 3 stanzas of 4 lines each
- "Mortality" T.ms. 1 p. (purple ribbon)
 Title: M O R T A L I T Y
 First line: Pan strayed into an orchard
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1928-21]
 Contents: Typescript draft of poem, 5 stanzas of 4 lines each; several emendations in pencil.
- "The Mother of the Cloistered" T.ms. 1 p. (purple carbon)
 Title: THE MOTHER OF THE CLOISTERED
 First line: Oh, they ask me am I lonely
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1928-30]
 Contents: Carbon copy draft of poem, 5 stanzas of 4 lines each; 2 emendations in pencil.

- "New Age" T.ms. 1p. (black carbon)
 Title: NEW AGE
 First line: Announce the travail, not the birth;
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1940-45]
 Contents: Typescript draft of poem, 4 lines; 1
 emendation, 2 corrections in pencil.
 Found immediately above ART (q.v.)
- "A New Zealand Folk Song" A.ms. 1 p. (Duggan's hand in pencil)
 Title: A New Zealand Folk Song
 First line: When they round up the steers in the valley
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1935-39]
 Contents: Manuscript of poem, 4 stanzas of 4 lines each.
- "The Nursing Sisters" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: THE NURSING SISTERS
 First line: You know you have our praise, but what are
 praises?
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1925-30]
 Contents: Carbon copy draft of poem, 4 stanzas of 4
 lines each; 2 corrections in pencil.
- "Obscurity" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: OBSCURITY
 First line: Ah what an ease it is to be obscure;
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1945-50]
 Contents: Carbon copy draft of poem, 4 lines; 3
 corrections in pencil.
- "The Old Answer" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: THE OLD ANSWER
 First line: You asked me: - "How is Eire?"
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1925-30]
 Contents: Typescript draft of poem, 8 stanzas of 4
 lines each; 2 corrections in pencil.
- "An Old Woman's Prayer" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: AN OLD WOMAN'S PRAYER
 First line: The rain has come and washed the skies.
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper.
 Date: [1920-25]
 Contents: Typescript draft of poem; 1 emendation in
 black ink.
- "Origin" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: O R I G I N
 First line: The sea spoke and we were its word
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1945-50]
 Contents: Typescript draft of poem, 19 lines; 1
 correction in pencil.

- "Period Piece, 1942" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: PERIOD PIECE, 1942
 First line: Behave yourself, my father,
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: 1942
 Contents: Carbon copy draft of poem, 3 stanzas of 4 lines each; 2 corrections in pencil.
- "A Plea for the Women" T.ms. 2 p. (black carbon)
 Title: A PLEA FOR THE WOMEN
 First line: You, singing dark against the stormy sunset,
 Collation: 2 sheets of typing paper
 Date: [1920-25]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of poem, 7 stanzas of 5 lines each.
- "Post-War" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: POST-WAR
 First line: We are conceived of truth and in our marrow
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1945-47]
 Contents: Carbon copy draft of poem, 28 lines; 8 lines deleted; other pencilled emendations.
- "Post-War" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: POST-WAR
 First line: When peace shall fall upon this raging planet
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1940-45]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 20 lines.
- "Praise" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: PRAISE
 First line: When first I read that page, I read it slow,
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1928-32]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 4 stanzas of 4 lines each.
- "Prescience" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: PRESCIENCE
 First line: Children are kinging in a field of Asia,
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1918-21]
 Contents: Carbon copy draft of poem, 2 stanzas of 4 lines each; 1 correction in blue ink and 1 emendation in pencil.
- "Prescience" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: PRESCIENCE
 First line: Though I have walked from thunder into thunder
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1930-35]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of poem, 2 stanzas of 4 lines each.

- "Quest" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: Q U E S T
 First line: Why not the great lancers, why not the
 chevaliers golden?
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1925-30]
 Contents: Carbon copy draft of poem, 4 stanzas of 3
 lines each; 2 emendations, 1 correction
 in pencil.
- "Remembrance" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: REMEMBRANCE
 First line: My eyes are blinded still though Spring has
 lit the hills
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1925-30]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of poem, 4 stanzas of
 4 lines each.
- "Requiescat" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: REQUIESCAT
 First line: A lake is solitary. It lies earthfast
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1930-35]
 Contents: Typescript draft of poem, 2 stanzas of 14
 and 16 lines respectively; several
 corrections in pencil.
- "Resemblance" T.ms. 1 p. (purple ribbon)
 Title: RESEMBLANCE
 First line: We are too like one father
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1927]
 Contents: Typescript draft of poem, 2 stanzas of 4 lines
 each; 3 corrections in pencil.
- "Revelation" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: REVELATION
 First line: The lesser grace that came before
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1930-35]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of poem, 2 stanzas of
 6 lines each.
- "Reversion" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: REVERSION
 First line: You have escaped your age, and not too soon.
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1920-25]
 Contents : Typescript of poem, 10 lines.
- "The Riro Riro" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: THE RIRO RIRO
 First line: Which is the saint, the little self-forgetter?
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1923-25]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of poem, 5 stanzas of
 4 lines each.

- "St. Francis 1944" A.ms. 2 p. (Duggan's hand in pencil)
 Title: St. Francis, 1944.
 First line: Poverino,
 Collation: 2 sheets of typing paper
 Date: 1944
 Contents: Manuscript draft of poem, 5 stanzas of
 varying lengths; 1 correction in blue ink.
- "Shyness" T.ms. 1 p. (purple carbon)
 Title: SHYNESS
 First line: This is the honey in my comb of days -
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1927-28]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of poem, 4 lines.
- "Sic Vos" T.ms. 1 p. (blue ribbon)
 Title: SIC VOS
 First line: Bee, you are better off than I
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1920-25]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 3 stanzas of 4 lines each.
- "Sisters of St. Joseph" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH
 First line: The long days through, you counsel and you teach,
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1935-40]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of poem, 3 stanzas of
 4 lines each.
- "The Slow One" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: THE SLOW ONE
 First line: When we two walked the morning town
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1925-30]
 Contents: Typescript draft of poem, 4 stanzas of 4 lines
 each; 2 corrections in pencil.
- "So you Appeal to Nature?" A.ms. 1 p. (Duggan's hand in pencil)
 Title: [SO YOU APPEAL TO NATURE?]
 First line: So you appeal to Nature?
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1938]
 Contents: Manuscript draft of untitled poem, 6 stanzas
 of 4 lines each; many emendations in pencil.
 Verso: "Typed/24.7.38/J[ulia] M [cLeely]"
 (the poets companion).
- "Some no longer lament for youth" A.ms. 1 p. (Duggan's hand in pencil)
 Title: [Some no longer lament for youth]
 First line: Some no longer lament for youth
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1945-50]
 Contents: Manuscript draft of untitled poem, 2 stanzas
 of 4 lines each; several emendations also
 in pencil.

"Song" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: S O N G
 First line: I know you but leave me
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1930-35]
 Contents: Carbon copy draft of poem, 3 stanzas of 5 lines each; final stanza cancelled in pencil; alternative stanza provided.

"Songs" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: SONGS
 First line: My songs mean nothing to another,
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1930-35]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of poem, 2 stanzas of 4 lines each.

"Style" T.ms. 1.p. (black ribbon)
 Title: STYLE
 First line: It is the water that to wine
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1930-35]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 2 stanzas of 4 lines each.

"Tide" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: TIDE
 First line: All that
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1930-35]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 12 lines.

"To-day" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: TO-DAY
 First line: The heart that lives by love has local sense
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1935-40]
 Contents: Typescript draft of poem, 3 stanzas of 5 lines each; 2 emendations in pencil.

"To a Bad Correspondent" A.ms. 1 p. (Duggan's hand in pencil)
 Title: To a Bad Correspondent
 First line: The lazy moa lost his wings
 Collation: 1 sheet of unlined note-paper
 Date: [1930-35]
 Contents: Manuscript of poem, 4 lines.

"To One in Heaven" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: TO ONE IN HEAVEN
 First line: They say when wicks go black in dying eyes,
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1920-25]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of poem, 14 lines.

- "The Trinity"
 Title: T.M.S. 1 p. (black carbon)
THE TRINITY
 First line: When I was small they told to me
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1919-21]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of poem, 28 lines.
- "Two Towns"
 Title: T.M.S. 1 p. (black ribbon)
TWO TOWNS
 First line: Two towns in one town,
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1930-35]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 5 stanzas of 4 lines each.
- "Winter"
 Title: T.M.S. 1 p. (black carbon)
W I N T E R
 First line: Pity him not
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1918-21]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of poem, 3 stanzas of 4 lines each.
- "The Word of the Sun"
 Title: T.M.S. 1 p. (purple ribbon)
THE WORD OF THE SUN
 First line: The sun and I had a word
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1926]
 Contents: Typescript draft of poem, 4 stanzas of 5 lines each; 2 emendations in pencil.
- "The Young Recluse"
 Title: T.M.S. 1 p. (black carbon)
THE YOUNG RECLUSE
 First line: This was all he asked of life,
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1944-45]
 Contents: Carbon copy draft of poem, 5 stanzas of 4 lines each; 1 pencilled correction.

(2) Other Literary and Personal Papers(i) A Selected Checklist of Eileen Duggan's Letters

During her lifetime Eileen Duggan maintained an extensive correspondence. The following are some of the most significant letters of literary interest found among her papers. The letters are from:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Alexander, W.F. | <p>5 February, 1941: Discussing McCormick's <u>Letters and Art in New Zealand</u></p> <p>3 December, 1944: Asking her to reconsider her refusal to allow her work to appear in Curnow's <u>Book of New Zealand Verse</u></p> <p>16 September, 1945: Discussing her refusal to allow her work to appear in Marris's anthology.</p> <p>25 April, 1946: Asking if she had received a copy of Tremayne Curnow's <u>Good King Wenceslas</u></p> <p>21 June, 1946: Discusses her reaction to Tremayne Curnow.</p> <p>17 June, 1956: Discusses Chapman and Bennett's anthology.</p> |
| Casson, Sybil Thorndyke | <p>[n.d.] Thanking her for books of poetry and expressing admiration for her verse.</p> |
| Curnow, Allen | <p>13 December, 1948: Asking for permission to include her work in the revised edition of <u>A Book of New Zealand Verse</u></p> |
| de la Mare, Walter | <p>8 February, 1938: Tells of his reaction on first reading her poems.</p> <p>26 September, 1938: Expresses his disappointment with Yeats's <u>Oxford Book of English Verse</u></p> <p>7 July, 1951: Describes his reaction to <u>More Poems</u>.</p> <p>22 June, 1953: Discusses Scottish words.</p> |

- Duff, Oliver. 23 August, 1938: Informing her of Jessie Mackay's death and expresses the hope that she will "survey her life and work."
- Fairburn, A.R.D. [n.d. 1925] Discussing Shaw Neilson ⁹⁷ and railing at Australian writers generally, "the boot-and-saddle brigade".
- [n.d. 1929] Proposing an article on her and R.A.K. Mason.
- 19 May, 1929: Thanking her for material for the proposed article.
- 6 June, 1929: Discussing the difficulties encountered by the writer in New Zealand.
- Galway; Governor-General 31 January, 1937: A telegram announcing that she had been awarded the O.B.E. for services to literature.
- Hyde, Robin 15 December, 1934: Describing her "somewhat romanticised history of old Baron de Thierry ..."
- 12 April, 1935: Autobiographical information for an article Eileen Duggan proposed to write in the Woman's Mirror.
- 2 May, 1935: Discussing arrangements for the publication of her (Robin Hyde's) poems.
- 16 January, 1938: Announces her departure from New Zealand and assesses her own and Eileen Duggan's poetry.
- 12 April, 1936: Discussing life and literature.
- Jefford, Barbara [n.d.] Thanking Eileen Duggan for permission to read her poems at a public recital.

97. This correspondence arose as a result of Eileen Duggan's article "Shaw Neilson"; the Sun, Christchurch, 26 June, 1925, p.4.

- Johnson, Louis 31 January, 1951: Asking her to contribute to the New Zealand Poetry Yearbook.
- Mander, Jane 1 March, 1937 : A letter congratulating Eileen Duggan on receiving the O.B.E.

[n.d.] Thanking Eileen Duggan for a press notice of her Story of a New Zealand River.
- Mulgan, Alan 12 September, 1954: Discussing a selection of Jessie Mackay's poems for publication.
- Rankine Brown, J. 2 February, 1937: Praising her poetry and congratulating her on the award of the O.B.E.
- Reed, Wycliff 6 February, 1930: Expressing his admiration of her New Zealand Bird Songs.
- Reid, John 14 December, 1950: Concerning his hopes for a Fulbright Scholarship and his plans for a visit to America.

30 May, 1954: Discussing his year in the United States.
- Schroder, J.H.E. [n.d. 1930] Discussing Christchurch Press review of New Zealand Bird Songs.

18 January, 1930: Discusses his own reaction to New Zealand Bird Songs and her role in New Zealand literature.
- Scholefield, G.H. 18 October, 1949: Clarifying a press statement which suggested that the State Literary Fund was to assist in the publication of her Selected Poems.
- Tregear, Edward 22 March, 1925: Replying to her request for information about Hina.
- Unwin, Stanley 9 November, 1943: Discussing copy-right difficulties in relation to Allen Curnow's proposed anthology, and the problems associated with publishing in war-time.

(ii) The Duggan Papers in the Alexander Turnbull Library

- (a) MS Papers 280 (J.H.E. Schroder): 25 E. Duggan to J.H.E. Schroder.
- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 21 December, 1958 | Congratulation and comment on Schroder's book. |
| 20 September, 1959 | Congratulating Schroder for his stand in a controversy. |
| [4 November, 1959] | On the same subject. |
| [7 February, 1962] | Concerning Schroder's new occupation at Victoria University. |
| [5 June, 1962] | Suggests that Schroder write more essays or poems. |
| [30 August, 1962] | Comment on Schroder's new book. |
| Christmas, 1963 | A Christmas note. Informs him of her sister's death. |
| Christmas, [n.d.] | "I think that since your release from office the public has enjoyed your comments on anything from cabbages to kings ..." |
| Christmas, [n.d.] | A Christmas card. Suggests that Schroder should publish more while remaining in charge of the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation. |
| [n.d.] | Concerning the quality of Schroder's essays: "... though we met only once I felt a rare agreement on the fundamentals of literature and recognised you had a range of scholarship ... which covered ages and zones". |
| Christmas card [n.d.] | Concerning Schroder's accident. |
| Christmas card [n.d.] | Expressing hopes for his recovery. |
| Christmas card [n.d.] | Suggests that he write his reminiscences. |

- (b) MS Papers 280 (J.H.E. Schroder): 19

Poem copied from the fly-leaf of The Essay of Michael Lord of Montaigne. From Vol. 3 "Pignori Amicitiae" by Eileen Duggan.

- (c) MS. Papers 1087

Letter from Eileen Duggan to Peter Fraser, 23 January, 1936.
A Poem enclosed, "On Kingship" (Duggan's hand in pencil).

- (d) MS. Papers 148 (J.C. Anderson): 19b

26 August, 1930 Regretting that she was unable to attend Jessie Mackay's funeral:
"You are of the company of Jessie Mackay, a company which had esprit de corps ... with one desire to work for N.Z."

- (e) MS. Papers 224 (A.E. Mulgan): 12

n.d. to A.E. Mulgan. Discussing Mulgan's autobiography.

- (f) MS. Papers 224 (A.E. Mulgan): 16

Testimonial, n.d. Eileen Duggan on behalf of A.E. Mulgan.

- (g) MS. Papers 440 (A. Forrester Mackay): 3

A collection of musical compositions. Two lyrics by Eileen Duggan - The Kingfisher and Wellington Lullaby, 1843.

- (h) Misc. MS. 1264. Letter from Eileen Duggan to C.R. Allen, n.d. This is a copy of a letter contained in the Turnbull Library's reserve copy of Eileen Duggan's New Zealand Poems.

Note: Both the Mitchell Library and the National Library of Australia hold manuscript collections of Duggan material. Further material is in the possession of Mr. Pat Lawlor, Wellington.

PART THREE

R. A. K. M A S O N

1905 - 1971

R.A.K. MASON1. AN OUTLINE OF HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS

Ronald Allison Kells Mason was born in Penrose, Auckland, on the 10th of January, 1905. His father, Francis William Mason, was a manufacturing chemist whose own father had emigrated to New Zealand from Nottingham.

Ronald Mason's mother, an unusually possessive woman, was a daughter of a Major Kells, a colonist of the eighteen-forties and an army officer who lived at the garrison settlement of Howick.

Of these mixed origins Mason once wrote:

My ancestors on one side were Irishmen and consequently kings ... the Kells were writing great and scholarly books when the ancestors of all the Englishmen had scarcely finished swinging by their tails.

By another strain I am English, but at least I have the decency to be ashamed of it.¹

At the beginning of 1912, after the sudden death of his father, Ronald was sent to live with an aunt who was the school-teacher and post-mistress at Lichfield. A rigid Victorian spinster, she was entrusted with the major part of his primary schooling. He remained with her until the end of 1915, and then spent a final year at Panmure School.

In 1917 Mason entered Auckland Grammar School where, in 1919, he formed a close friendship with Rex Fairburn. He proved to be an especially good Latin student.

1. Mason Papers. This passage, found on a scrap of paper, was probably intended to introduce the Miscellany of Prose and Verse subsequently referred to (Cf. "Prose-Verse Miscellany".) The Mason Papers, with which this study is especially concerned, are in the possession of the poet's widow, Mrs. Dorothea Mason of Auckland.

1923, his first year out of Grammar School, was one of frustration and uncertain employment. Because of his poor record in Mathematics he was unable to gain entry to Auckland University College where he had hoped to continue his classical studies, while the slump of 1923-24 prevented him from finding any congenial employment. For much of the period from 1923 to 1932 Mason was employed as a tutor with the University Coaching College in Auckland.

Bibliographies of Mason's writing have traditionally begun with his In the Manner of Men (1923), but it is doubtful whether this should be regarded as a genuine publication. A printer bound up three booklets of quality paper and the hopeful young poet copied four poems into one of them. This was intended to be a kind of traveller's sample: it is doubtful, however, if any sale was made.

In one of his early journals Mason has recorded the source of his poetic gifts:

... I do not invent the words; I do not even repeat them from memory. I say them at the bidding of some invisible prompter far back in the dark stage of my soul. Sometimes I cannot but admire (in a disinterested fashion) the words which he gives me to speak ...²

In 1924 The Beggar³ was printed by Whitcombe and Tombs in an edition of one thousand copies. Appearing at a time when "... high hopes of the promised post-war land turned to bitterness, as we stumbled into the swamp of the 1924 slump and thence into the morass of the great depression."⁴ the publication did not sell well. The printers declined to advertise it in their window-display, and the young poet was forced to sell copies from door to door for a shilling -

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2. P.V.M. Manuscript Book "A", p. [30] (Cf. "Mason's Prose-Verse Miscellany" and footnote 33, p.126).
 3. Auckland, [printed by Whitcombe and Tombs for the author] 1924.
 4. Mason, R.A.K., Rex Fairburn, [Dunedin] , The Press Room of the University of Otago, 1962, p. [1] .

disposing of some fifty copies in this way. He sent a further fifty copies to Harold Monro, bookseller, critic and anthologist of the English Georgian movement, to sell in his Poetry Bookshop.⁵

The young poet was greatly disappointed when the excellence of these original, forthright poems was not recognised, and he gave vent to his feelings by inscribing a friend's copy with the words "To the one sacred soul in this city of sodomites."⁶

Penny Broadsheet⁷ appeared in 1925. The intuitions of youth have resulted in some of Mason's most striking poetry, and it is a remarkable fact that by this year he had written a good deal more than one-third of the poems which were later to appear in his Collected Poems.⁸ He was then aged twenty.

For the next two or three years Mason wrote very little poetry, and about 1928, when he began writing again, he had become dissatisfied with his intensely personal speculations about time, chance and death, and turned instead to a simpler idiom in verse while, simultaneously, becoming interested in poetic drama. Later he reminisced about the new direction:

... I felt with Synge that poetry could and should be as it was so long in Scotland and Ireland, a thing of the people but at the same time profound ...

Secondly ... I felt strongly the need for poetry and drama to move more closely together, I mean not as a mechanical revival of so-called "poetic drama" but in some form fitting to our age, with drama benefiting by the bite and precision of poetry, while poetry should learn again the simple and open texture of drama.⁹

5. Cf. Appendix 1, "The Monro Letter".

6. Recalled by Clifton Firth in a letter to Mason, 18 July, 1962.

7. Auckland, [the author].

8. Christchurch, Pegasus Press, 1962.

9. An untitled manuscript found among Mason's papers.

The result of this change is apparent in Squire Speaks,¹⁰ which was written in 1928-29, although not published until ten years later, and his important verse collection, No New Thing,¹¹ which was ready for publication in 1931, although its appearance was delayed until 1934.

In 1930 Mason began a novel, "Dreams Come True",¹² which describes the life of a young farming lad named John¹³ who attempts in Auckland and Lichfield to break away from the effects of a puritanical upbringing.

In 1932 that "... fierce, crusading ... rebel ..." ¹⁴ took over the editorship of the short-lived Phoenix¹⁵. From being a modernist literary manifesto under James Bertram, it became, under Mason an aggressive Marxist and polemical instrument.

In the previous year he had written to Fairburn that "... the mere act of existence in this mental atmosphere is a nightmare."¹⁶ and in Phoenix he expressed his anger at conditions in New Zealand. "This week is Auckland's 90th birthday", he informed Fairburn, "and they have organised a 'Cheer-up Week' to keep the urban rabble in psychological order. Bands and processions, ventriloquists and tumblers, ornamented cars and Fire-brigade displays. Meanwhile the stolid mob looks on and does its lumpish best to look amused ..." ¹⁷ The tone of his prose contributions to Phoenix was even more trenchant.

10. Christchurch, Caxton Press, 1938.

11. Auckland, Spearhead Publishers, 1934.

12. Copies of this uncompleted novel together with a commentary on the completed chapters are held in the Hocken Library and among Mason's papers.

13. Mason's family name was "John".

14. Alison, Jean, "R.A.K. Mason, 1905-1971", Landfall, 25 No. 3, September, 1971, p. 225.

15. The Phoenix; a quarterly magazine published by the Phoenix Committee of the University Literary Club, Auckland. (Cf. also, Appendix 2, "The Phoenix Affair").

16. Letter to Fairburn, 23 April, 1931. (Cf. also Appendix 3, "Why We Can't Write for Nuts.").

17. *ibid.*

Mason's two verse collections No New Thing and End of Day¹⁸ appeared in 1934 and 1936 respectively. Their publication marked what was virtually the end of his poetic output. In 1937 he wrote to Glover:

You ask me if I am still a Marxist. With the Manifesto continually happening in large quantities right under my nose!

.

As a matter of fact, one reason - only one - why I have given up writing was that I wanted to bring my artistic feelings into line with my intellectual knowledge.

I fancy I have about got there & in the future hope to publish some reasonably decent proletarian stuff.¹⁹

From 1936 until 1939 Mason was employed as a Public Works foreman and had neither time nor inclination for the writing of poetry. In fact, his 1941 selection, This Dark Will Lighten²⁰, contained only one new piece of verse, "Prelude", a doctrinaire poem which anticipates the dawn of a new social order.

Mason was to lead a highly active life for a further thirty years. He edited the People's Voice during the first years of the Second World War, and, after its suspension, its replacement, In Print, from September, 1941, until July, 1943. When publication of the People's Voice was again permitted in mid-1943, Mason was listed as editor.

During the period 1940-43 Mason was a foundation member and officer of the People's Theatre and the New Theatre Group, both of which were based in Auckland.²¹

Between 1944 and 1956 he did a good deal of writing for Challenge, the journal of the Auckland Builders' and General

18. Christchurch, Caxton Press.

19. 5 November, 1937 (Cf. also Appendix 4, "Why Mason Stopped Writing.")

20. Christchurch, Caxton Press.

21. Cf. Appendix 5, "The Verse Plays of R.A.K. Mason."

Labourers' Union which he also edited. It was under the auspices of that Union that he published Frontier Forsaken, An Outline History of the Cook Islands,²² in 1947.

From 1957 on, Mason attempted to earn a living as a landscape gardener, but the work did not engage his interest sufficiently and Eden Garden Services was not a profitable enterprise.

The main events of Mason's last years included his visit to China as first member and President of the New Zealand-China Society in 1957, his acceptance of the Burns Fellowship for 1962 - an award which "... came at a time when things had been too grim too long for me."²³, and the appearance of his Collected Poems in the same year.²⁴

During the 'sixties Mason occupied himself with plans for several new literary projects,²⁵ but it was apparent that his creative life had long since ended. The last piece of verse he wrote in his lifetime, an anthem for the Girl Guides' Association of New Zealand, was a far cry from those grimly intuitive verses with which he began his writing career in an inhospitable country at an unpropitious time.

In November, 1965, Helen Shaw received a letter from Geoffrey de Montalk, an associate of Mason's earliest writing days. The provocative Count was writing from England in praise of D'Arcy Cresswell, "... a far better poet than any they had in this degenerate Kingdom."²⁶ He went on to say:

Nevertheless, I feel that Ronald Arthur [sic] Kells Mason, living I believe as a journeyman gardener in the Pig Island (and to wit at Auckland) is a much better poet. If it be true that Mason is earning a living as a gardener, the whole of New Zealand ought to be ashamed of itself, if capable

22. Auckland, "Challenge".

23. Letter to Judah Waten, 22 February, 1962.

24. Cf. Appendix 6, "Glover's Plans for Mason's 'Collected Poems'."

25. Cf. Appendix 7, "'We speak Our Own Words', Mason's Proposed Anthology of New Zealand Verse."

26. Cited by Helen Shaw in a letter to Mason, November, 1965.

thereof. He knows Latin and Greek better than most Pig Islanders know English, and is a poet with a genuinely original style and not a²⁷ deliberately thought-up originality either.

In 1971, R.A.K. Mason, a poet of the nineteen-twenties and, latterly, sole member of Eden Garden Services Ltd., died in Takapuna, Auckland.

27. *ibid.*

2. MASON'S POETRY MANUSCRIPTS.

(1) Their Categories

Mason's poetry manuscripts were, for the most part, catalogued by the poet himself during his lifetime.

There are three poetry manuscript books: "Poems - Odds & Ends", "Poems" and "Poems Uncompleted". The majority of the remaining poems are on loose sheets of paper, most of which are filed under various headings. These include: "Poems Complete but Mainly of Pathological Interest Only", "Unpublished Sonnets - Not to Publish", "Variae Lectiones of Published Stuff", "Jottings - path. only" and "To Finish".

A small notebook containing mainly epigrams and prose notes also holds manuscript drafts of two poems. The balance of the collection, apart from occasional poems not included in one of the above categories, seem to have been composed during Mason's tenure of the Burns Fellowship.

(2) Drafts of Published Poems

There are very few advanced drafts of published poems among Mason's literary manuscripts. Those that do exist are distributed haphazardly throughout his files.

Thus, in the file "Unpublished Sonnets Not to Publish" are found "Come Out My Soul" (Collected Poems, 113), "Away is Flown Each Petty Rag" (C.P., 102), and "Arius Prays" (C.P., 108).

From "Poems Complete But Mainly of Pathological Interest Only" are "Ad Mariam" (C.P., 112) and "Nails and a Cross" (C.P., 109). "Poems - Odds and Ends" includes the final draft of "The Seventh Wound Protests" (C.P., 107).

The fact that Mason included these five pieces in his Collected Poems shows that he regarded them subsequently as

worthy of publication or re-publication despite his earlier rejection of them.

A few preliminary drafts of published poems are still in existence. These are:

- i) A pencilled stanza from "New Life" (C.P., 84), with minor emendations.
- ii) Two partial drafts of "She Kept Cows" (C.P., 111); the first of these contains the opening stanza and the first two lines of the closing stanza, while the second contains the opening stanza and the first two lines of the second stanza.)
- iii) A draft of "The Young Man Thinks of Sons" (C.P., 60) which includes two almost completed stanzas and several other lines and phrases.
- iv) A draft of "Prelude" (from "End of Day", C.P., 81). This contains four stanzas of four lines each with a number of alternative readings, corrections and emendations. In effect, this draft is very close to the final version.

At a later time, Mason recorded some comments on the poem:

"... every language tends to have its own characteristics; In the case of Latin, it is brevity, precision, and an almost colloquial quality - such Latin, I mean, as that of Caesar and Catullus, not the Latin of that windbag Cicero, which I might describe as politician's Latin.

I tried to make this point in ... 'Prelude' ... It compares the curt, clipped style of Julius Caesar, conquerer of Gaul, to the short swords of his legion, and implicitly recommends it as a basis for style."²⁸

- v) A draft of "Our love was a grim citadel"; after eleven lines of preliminary workings in a longer rhythmical unit and with phrases not included in the final version, the opening four lines of the poem are recorded as if they had emerged instinctively and in a manner unrelated to the previous workings.

28. Untitled typescript notes for a public lecture given by Mason in Dunedin in 1962.

The relative scarcity of drafts among Mason's literary manuscripts and the evidence of the drafts of "Prelude" and of "Our love was a grim citadel" suggest that, as Stead believed,²⁹ Mason's art depended upon an inspirational creative process - an observation which is further underlined by Mason's claim that "Nox Perpetua Dormienda" came to him in an effortless fashion.³⁰

Of even greater interest than these work-sheets, however, is an early draft of "Body of John":

Here Autumn is come and the leaves grow small
 The body of Ben enlarges
 And wither and shrivel and crisp ere they fall
 The body of Ben discharges.

And Winter is here that lily of white
 Ben's flesh grows black and bloated
 Come talk friends come drink we come sing this cold night
 And rats have gnawed his throat out.

Now Spring bears a robe to the earth again
 His bones lie bare hereunder
 Now burgeons each herb and tree and grain
 His boards have burst asunder

This draft which bears the ironic title "Progress" has little of the accumulated power of the final version. Before he had turned nineteen Mason had revised the poem quite brilliantly:

Oh I have grown so shrivelled and sere
But the body of John enlarges
 and I can scarcely summon a tear
but the body of John discharges

It's true my old roof is near ready to drop
But John's boards have burst asunder
 and I am perishing cold here atop ³¹
but his bones lie stark hereunder.

29. Stead, C.K., "R.A.K. Mason's Poetry", Comment, 4 No. 4, July, 1963, p.35.

30. P.V.M. Manuscript Book "C", p. [27].

31. Collected Poems, p.32.

It is interesting to observe that the protagonist of the earlier draft is called "Ben" and that of the second, "John". This mysterious poem may be partly elucidated if one recalls that Ron Mason's family name was John, and that a "Benjamin" is the younger son, as, once again, Mason was. The poem may be partly autobiographical, yet it is greatly enhanced by reason of the fact that it is open to a number of interpretations. "Body of John" has a transcending significance which he seldom bettered in his work.³²

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32. Geoffrey de Montalk wrote to Mason to describe Humbert Wolfe's reaction to his poems: "... I have met Humbert Wolfe - he knew all about you, and told me all about your poems before I even mentioned your name. 'The Body of John' upset him, but he got over it as I did, and I believe he thinks you are not too bad. Quant à moi, it looks as if he is convinced of my poetic gifts and intends to help me. He is very pleasant and beautiful.", Postcard, 11 February, 1925.

(3) Fragments

Mason's journals and workbooks contain numerous fragments of poems, single stanzas, lines, part-lines, ideas for poems, verse and prose epigrams and prose settings for poems - the latter point to his interest in dramatic verse. The presence of rhyme-lists in a number of manuscripts reveals that he sometimes moulded his poems, especially the sonnets, to a prescribed pattern, while the existence of so many fragments shows that he did not work painstakingly at drafts and often lacked a sustained imaginative impulse which would allow him to bring a draft to completion.

In one of his journals he described the difficulties that confronted him when he settled down to write verse:

... I find it very hard in writing to know just how to punctuate properly, especially just where to put the commas. Also paragraphing puzzled me for a long time. I read the grammar-books but they didn't help much, so I just gave up and sort of trusted to luck. With poetry I was worried to get the lines the right length so that the rhymes would come just in the proper place. However, that tumbled out all right. I found there was no use worrying, for at times I couldn't possibly manage to get a line right for all the struggling in the world; and at others I just couldn't go wrong and all went well without any worry - though for the life of me I can't reason how it is done at such times as it is done. All these rules and things for writing seem to be either no trouble or of no account when you are full of yourself and going full speed ahead, so I don't think I shall worry myself so much about them in future.³³

33. P.V.M. Manuscript Book "C", p. [26] . The Miscellany is found in four booklets which I have designated Manuscript Books "A", "B", "C" and "D".

(4) Mason's Prose-Verse Miscellany

The passage cited immediately above comes from what Mason referred to in No New Thing as " ... a sort of Odyssey expressing the whole history of New Zealand.",³⁴ a project on which he laboured during the nineteen -twenties.

Towards the end of 1922 Mason conceived the idea of interspersing his poems with passages of prose. In his suppressed note to No New Thing he described his aim as "... a sort of vast Human Comedy, mingled prose and verse ..."³⁵

By February, 1923, the project was already taking shape in the form of an interchange of letters between a New Zealander named John and a German doctor from Karlsbaden.

Mason's descriptions of the venture suggest a scheme of heroic style and epic proportions. The following extract is typical of much of the work:

... I enclose a photo of myself; I have had it taken in a tennis-shirt you see, just in case posterity ever wants to look at it.

It's just as well to be on the look-out for these little points, because there's no knowing what posterity may want to do to you - look what gods men make of St. Louis of Stevenson & St. Laurence of Sterne. Does anything look queerer than one of your Victorian poets, photographed with long drawing whiskers dawdling down the side of his face...³⁶

Eventually Mason was forced to relinquish the scheme, partly because of his ignorance of conditions in Germany and partly because of its excessive length. He must have also recognised that the prose context detracted from the effectiveness of the poetry.

34. "Notes", No New Thing, p. [xxvii].

35. Mason Papers, held on file headed "Variae Lectiones of Published Stuff".

36. "Poems", p. [21] . Some of the passages of the Miscellany are scattered through the poetry manuscript books.

It is obvious that Mason's efforts were not well directed. There was a rambling and contrived air about the project which doomed it from its inception. As early as 1923 its author was aware of this: "And if I am remembered it will be for some trifling sonnet or beggarly ode - things which needed no effort - and certainly not for this great achievement, this magnum opus, this fowl-house which has taken so many months of tribulation and contrivance."³⁷

The real value of the Miscellany resides in those passages which describe his methods of composition and which reveal the subjective states of the young poet.

37. P.V.M. Manuscript Book "C", p. [6].

(5) A Description of Mason's Unpublished Poetry Manuscripts

One of the earliest of these dates from his third or fourth year at Auckland Grammar School. Entitled "Bethlehem", it expresses Mason's youthful piety - the result of his conservative and Anglican upbringing:

As you, or I, or any one of us -
 His visage radiant with relief and joy -
 The Father sat him down upon a truss,
 And took upon his knees the tiny boy.

The Mother looked up from the anguished hay
 Wherein had been her lowly labouring-place,
 And smiled in pain up at them whence she lay,
 And brighter than a halo was her face.

Born not as emperors are, to gold and silk,
 Yet more imperial far, the little child,
 Upon his lips not dry yet the first milk,
 Looked up, and crowed, and beat small hands,
 and smiled.

An epigram written in 1923 shows that, even by that time, Mason was outgrowing his pietistic manner. "On Christ" reveals a cynicism which was to become increasingly evident in his later writing:

He died in beating back the rich,
 but, truly forgiving, they
 set him as their god on banners ... which
 won them the fight next day.

It must be assumed that the Christ-figure of Mason's poetry is neither God nor man, but what Kerenyi has called "... the immortal prototype of man."³⁸

"Charity", a poem which pre-dates those in The Beggar, is similarly scornful of the contrast between primitive Christianity and the form it took in the contemporary Church:

38. Kerenyi, C., Prometheus: Archetypal Image of Human Existence, New York, Pantheon Books, 1963, p.17.

Loud rolls the organ its resonant chaunt,
 Haughtily pealing in arrogant vaunt
 Of the Barefoot Man who suffered the taunt
 And blows of the Roman soldiery.

Proud walks the priest by whose sleek sides rise
 Thick redolent clouds of all-fragrant spice
 From out of the uttermost Arabies -
 From Lesser and Petraean Araby.

High swells the praise of the Trinity,
 And loud sings the choir the virtues three
 Of Faith and of Hope and of Charity,
 And the greatest of these is Charity.

While ever around and about the door -
 Their downcast moan make the hungry poor -
 "We ask but a crust, but a crust and no more,
 → |For His sake who suffered on Calvary."

But never a man of those Men of Greed
 Lifteth an eye from his book in heed
 Of those who are maimed and halt and in need,
 As once were the dwellers by Galilee.

I see, methinks - surely no eye can fail!
 Lo, mark well the wound of the driven nail
 And the members racked and the features pale,
 Death - pale from the last long agony -
 Methinks the Nail-Stricken One weeps to see
 How men live the virtue of Charity.

Mason's true tone, at once sceptical and ironic, is already present in this early indictment of the hypocrisy of the Christian Churches. The poem is supported by a remark in one of his manuscript books: "An Art Union has no more to do with Art than a Christian Union has to do with Christ."³⁹ Another reference to "... a sort of kitchen-maid Christianity "⁴⁰ likewise emphasises one of Mason's central themes.

Another group of early unpublished poems shows Mason's pre-occupation with death or with the mystery of life set against a climate of death. The following untitled poem, carefully printed in a boy's hand, must date from his early teen-age years:

39. P.V.M. Manuscript Book "B", p. [11].

40. Notebook "A", p. [3].

Like a great silent hound,
 The omnipresent ground
 Tracks all our little steps: and every day,
 Turn we no matter where
 Exultant sods are there
 Laughing to think they have us always.

Though we are in the dark,
 They track us plain, and mark
 Our every move, and stand Prepared to stab
 As prisoned men of old
 Were Pent in a squared hold
 Where hurtling death lurked in one noteless stab.

Another early manuscript poem, " [The greedy earth...] ", illustrates further a conviction which he confided to his manuscript book: "The ghastly realisation that Death is not just a subject for disinterested speculation but a machine made to kill all men, to murder me. Not an easy piece of material to cut precious sonnets out of, but an entangling shroud."⁴¹

An untitled quatrain written during the early nineteen-twenties should also be cited in this context:

Place a branch upon the grave
 Lest the dead make you a slave
 Do not entertain your grief
 Past the fall of the last leaf.

The elegiac mood may have resulted from a combination of circumstances - his Celtic temperament, his father's early death, and the pains and loneliness of a sensitive adolescence. It may have also derived in part from the collision of a youthful piety with the grimness of early Depression life.

Among the poems in manuscript there are a number of sonnets written in the years 1923-24 which he chose not to publish. They include "The Searcher After Truth", "Dejected in Defeat Thru Having Nothing to Assault" and "Gaudeo Quod Nescio". The last-named, dated October, 1923, will serve to illustrate the new mood:

41. P.V.M. Manuscript Book "B", p. [5].

They urge me on for worship & for praise
 A gross, material, unmystical & sly
 Shrewd, bargainer with a usurous, reckoning eye
 Demanding all in adulation raise
 Their hands: a cruel snarer-God who lays
 His gins and pitfalls and doth ambushed lie
 For captives: who doth amass upon high
 The record of each tripping in life's maze
 To damn men for them after run their days.

This is the narrow god they give but I,
 Content not, still ideal - "questing" cry
 "Let me conclusions lack; for there be ways
 And ways: and I should rather worship a blind haze
 Than your clay gods of creed & certainty."

An outraged sensibility reacts uncompromisingly to the unhappiness caused by an unpropitious life, human hostility and divine tyranny. Such poems as this are courageous affirmations of personality, yet, at the same time, they reveal a self-consciousness which is accompanied by self-pity and a raw rhetoric. Stead believed that a more self-conscious tone entered Mason's work with the publication of No New Thing,⁴² but these manuscripts indicate that he was susceptible to this weakness quite early in his writing life.

Like "Lullaby", the poem establishes the archetypal figure of much of Mason's subsequent verse - the heroic and lonely rebel who wages war on all forms of repressive authority. This characteristic attitude results in what has been identified in another context as "... a composite anti-Christian Titanism."⁴³

The mood of "Gaudeo Quod Nescio" is also related to "The Agnostic", another poem from The Beggar. The young Mason was becoming increasingly impatient of creeds: the frame of reference which he consistently maintained throughout his writing life was secular and humanist. In his journals he wrote: "Belief is being ignorant and denying it: agnosticism is being ignorant and respectfully admitting it: atheism is

42. op.cit., p.36.

43. Bush, Douglas, Pagan Myth and Christian Tradition in English Poetry, Philadelphia, American Philosophical Society, 1968, p.41. (The Jayne Lectures for 1967).

being ignorant and glorifying it. Religion is man's supreme impertinence, belief is a gesture of insult to God. One only thing justifies it - the pleasure it gives to men ..."⁴⁴

Yet his temperament was such that he was quite unable to hold even the humanist-agnostic position with equanimity. Undoubtedly it is lack of assurance which accounts for much of the tension and complexity of his writing. He wrote once: "I have tried - or should I say been forced - to believe nothing and understand everything. Of course I have succeeded in neither, still I have gone further than most men ..."⁴⁵. Truth and counter-truth collide in his work, and from that shock emerge some of the strongest poems in our literature.

The characteristic tone of Mason's poetry is thus established remarkably early. It is a poetry of violence "... not only because it is full of violent events - the curse, the execution - but also because it celebrates a bout of tussles between opposed values."⁴⁶

One of the death-poems remaining in manuscript illustrates Mason's classical interests. As in "Wayfarers", Mason here claims kinship with the brotherhood of the defeated:

Death came in quest of me
But I unwillingly
Answered his call: said He
How wouldst thou come to me?
If thou had choice of fate
How wouldst thou come to me?

Answered I eagerly
Grant me great Lord that I
When 'tis my time to die
Fall at Thermopylae
With stern Leonidas
Fall at Thermopylae

44. P.V.M. Manuscript Book "C", p. [11].

45. P.V.M. Manuscript Book "B", p. [4].

46. Savage, Roger, in his review of Mason's Collected Poems, Landfall, 17 No. 3, September, 1963, p.286.

The vision is that of an intuitive elegiac poet who recognises himself as one of the defeated and thus as sharing the common lot of a neglected and suffering humanity. Among his published work "In Perpetuum Vale", more sombrely, and "The Lesser Stars", more wistfully, announce a similar grief.

While Mason's stoicism sometimes allows him to ward off that grief, "The Dismissal", like other published and unpublished poems, reveals that he could also fall victim to an extreme pessimism:

I looked into her lordly eyes,
 But they were as hard as gold:
 I looked into her lovely face
 But it was narrow and cold.

She whom I had known so long,
 She whom I had loved so well
 Let me go out again to the night
 To descend once more into Hell.

Much of Mason's poetry is concerned with isolation of man in time and space. In this context "The Song of a Lone Garrison", dated "2.1.24" in the author's own hand, is especially interesting. While the poem exists in its own right it seems to have a close affinity with "Sonnet of Brotherhood". In fact, it is possible that the latter poem was derived from the former:

The gods have made & the gods will wreck;
 The gods hold me with chains round my neck
 The gods hold thee at their call & beck
 The gods have thee at their beck and call
 The gods have thee as they have us all
 As the gods must have whate'er may befall.
 For the gods be great and we men be small
 So I pray you let us be comrades all.

For we're all of us fools in Fate's strong hand
 And we're all of us chained with an iron band
 And slaves & kings we obey Death's command
 One & all we're by unknown fingers rought
 And none is made as the rest feel he ought
 And alike we're all of us trapped & caught
 In a mesh of existence that we not sought
 For the gods be great & we men be small
 So I pray you let us be comrades all.

For some have beauty while some have none
 And some have health & wealth by the ton
 While some get scarcely the air & the sun,
 While some get scarcely the sun & the air.
 But the gods for all their fine jest prepare
 For even the best Death has room & to spare
 And even the greatest gets only his share.
 For we'll lie down alike in a small space there
 And for smallness & greatness we'll none of us care
 For the gods they be great & we men be small
 So I pray you let us be comrades all.

Isolation and defeat are a recurring theme in Mason's poetry. One finds it, paradoxically, in the well-known "Sonnet of Brotherhood". Paradoxically, because, as Kerenyi has remarked:

Isolation as a common fate - this modern contradiction - was not part of the Greek image of man. In the eyes of the Greeks, humanity was distinguished from divinity with all possible clarity: it was at once deilón and deinón ... The death of the individual was no threat to the human race; the mortality of mortals was just one shading - the darkest of all - in the comprehensive attribute of deilón, the general human wretchedness."⁴⁷

In this and related poems Mason has blended the concept of deilón, "the general human wretchedness", with the socialist notion of the brotherhood of man.

Many years after he wrote "The Song of a Lone Garrison", in the course of a broadcast entitled "Making a Poem", Mason described his attitudes to isolation and to the community of man:

Ever since childhood - and thanks primarily to ancient family traditions brought by pioneer forefathers - I have been impressed most powerfully by the unity of the human race as opposed to its diversity. Whether at home or abroad, it is the points evidencing this fact of unity that have most appealed to me.

47. Kerenyi, op.cit., p.19.

In this, I have often found cause for dispute. Of course, everyone recognises the existence of diversity and of unity. Grounds of dispute lie in the degree of emphasis a person places on one aspect of humanity or the other.

I feel myself that our so-called Western civilisation tends to put far too much stress on diversity, on points of discontinuity and difference. And this disease, I fear, is too often aggravated by the very ones who should alleviate it, by historians and social scientists.

They tend to isolate some portion of time or space for purposes of closer study and, when they have done that, neglect to restore it to its proper place in the whole. Certainly it may be a necessary scientific procedure to examine some portion of humanity as it were with a microscope: But it is equally or even more necessary to glance up at times and see how all works in together, to recall how, since time immemorial, the whole human race has seethed over the vast arc of the continents and their islands, all humanity intermingling and either directly or indirectly inter-connected.

The trend is to leave the consideration of human unity to philosophers, poets and exponents of pure religion - three types of thinkers who are rather in the discard among us today ...⁴⁸

Some critics believe that "Sonnet of Brotherhood" conveys the most powerful intuitions of alienation in our literature, but it is plain that the author's intention was to stress "the unity of the human race ..."

Although a relatively large number of poems from the earliest years of Mason's writing are to be found among his manuscripts, there are very few remaining from the period which saw the second flowering of his work in the late nineteen-twenties. "Thoughts Beyond Good and Evil", a poem which seems to belong to the mid-twenties, shows an increasing literary awareness:

48. Mason Papers. The Typescript was prepared for broadcasting in 1959.

This is our sort: no thing abides -
there's flux and flow, and nought besides:
the Kalends come - and lo, the Ides!

This stone, this so substantial thing,
is wind-swept barley quivering,
or a trapped bird's heart, or a moth's wing.

Just now the Tarquins held their sway
haughty in Rome, the old tales say:
now they're dead & Rome's had her day.

And in the stream truth comes, truth goes,
as transitory as the rose,
lovely and idle as the snows.

The gods sweep on, force blind eternal:
there's neither sin with those infernal
nor any virtue in the supernal.

By accident and not by worth
Jove rules the lands of light and mirth
and Dis the vast dark under earth.

It is not ill, it is not well
that Heaven lapses into Hell
as when of old the angels fell.

Much of Mason's poetry stems from his determination to rid his life of the constraints which were imposed on it in the name of religious orthodoxy. The self-imposed task was not any easy one. In his journal he wrote: "In all my religious musings, I have been able to come to only two settled conclusions - the one that there is a Deity, the other that there is none."⁴⁹

During the years immediately following the publication of The Beggar Mason did not write much poetry. A change was imminent. In his manuscript book he had written:

I sometimes do write poems about pleasant things,
but somehow they don't seem very good. The
optimistic things that I see and read and think
and do all seem to slide away from me when I sit down
to write poetry ... I am very worried about it,
because I do want to brighten life and make this
world a better place for my being in it ..."⁵⁰

49. P.V.M. Manuscript Book "C", p. [29].

50. *ibid.*, p. [12.].

His sonnet, "Come Out My Soul", announces the change from his more introspective manner.

The suppressed epigraph for No New Thing is forthright, even truculent. It is entitled "New Fruit from Old Stocks":

This is the book which I have written well:
if you don't like it you can go to Hell.⁵¹

The text of the original Preface of that collection is similarly forthright. Ultimately, Mason decided not to publish it:

Though the publication of one book of poetry by a New Zealander - and that in youth- may be pardonable; yet a second venture - and this in manhood - smacks so strongly of insanity that an explanation would seem called for. Hence that discord and sad lapse from Stoicism, a prose note to a book of poetry.

The truth is that the work here printed was intended to fit into a sort of vast Human Comedy, mingled prose and verse, which I long ago designed. But youth having smouldered away in senseless drudgery I can scarcely now expect age to provide the necessary fire. I had long abandoned all idea of publication when my true friend Rex Fairburn in the teeth of my snarls forced me to collect such fragments as I could find and to put them into his hands. To him the praise to him the blame.

This note is meant as an explanation and not as a defence against fools - if against such people defence is conceivable. The poems are too deeply soaked in an ancient tradition to hope to escape the charge of modernism: they are too strongly imbued with religious sense to hope to escape the stigma of impiety. Still I fear that, for once wallowers in self-righteousness must forego their other customary pleasure - that of screaming against sexuality. My apologies: there was no definite intention of depriving worthy people of so dear a pleasure - it is entirely the fault of my artistic canons. And at any rate to a mind really intent on revelling in such delights doubtless some grounds will be discovered somewhere in the book.

51. Both this epigraph and the following preface were filed by Mason under the title "Variae Lectiones of Published Stuff."

proper ancient meaning. I do not wish to claim credit for these things, but really they must be insisted on."⁵³

The published poem enacts the prelude to the crucifixion in a simple diction resonant with the most tragic of ironies:

Judas Iscariot
 sat in the upper
 room with the others
 at the last supper

And sitting there smiled
 up at his master ...

Mason's notebooks contain a postscript to the poem. A prose passage describes an event after the Crucifixion:

... So chubby little Judas took his pudgy white hands and little baby face off into the darkness. As he toddled along the road beside his comfortable wife his fat paunch wobbled in front of him.

Within him glowed a pleasant feeling of duty well done even at the cost of sacrificing a friend

"You know, I'm a pretty tolerant and broad-minded man. I sometimes think that perhaps there was something in what he said."⁵⁴

Curnow has observed that Mason presents Judas under the guise of an Englishman, depicting him with typical "English banalities."⁵⁵ Recalling Mason's long-standing detestation of the English and his stated preference for the Celtic and Gaelic elements in his own personality it can be seen that the poet is here indulging a secret dislike and enriching the poem with a private joke.

Another passage from Mason's unpublished prose writings is a useful gloss to the text:

53. P.V.M. Manuscript Book "D", p. [28]

54. *ibid.*, p. [51]

55. Introduction to the Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse, Penguin Books, London, 1960, p.43.

Recently in the Eichman case, there was dispute as to whether he was a ruthless killer or merely a man acting without reflection in his own immediate interests. This poem suggests that they may be identical, that the main source of human sorrow may well lie in the man acting cheerfully and blindly in his own interest ...⁵⁶

All his life Mason was to assail cant and hypocrisy but nowhere to better effect than in the memorable lines of "Judas Iscariot" where deftness and restraint point the treachery.

A similar irony is often found in Mason's treatment of the Christ-figure - an irony of unrealised expectations. It rests in the assertion of divinity by one whom Mason's journal described as " ... a dervish, red-fed and dead-beat who snarled out his life on a bit of wood in the remotest provinces."⁵⁷

"Failure", a poem written about 1930, shows Mason's abandonment of the archaic language of his earlier writings and his adoption of the patterns of everyday speech:

As I passed the old house just now,
I'm sure I heard her laughter -
I never can forget quite how
that little "click" came after
her liquid throat's outpouring
when windows and grey rafter
shook as some long-dead joke set boys and lasses
roaring.

Lean rags of cloud rip out and fly,
like beggar's rags a-flutter,
and in the swollen, unhealthy sky
the thunders start to mutter -
I must be up and going.
It's no good in the gutter
when swirling waters knotted like a man's ribs,
start flowing.

Ah! curse the damned rain, here it comes
with a sharp, vicious patter,
like little spiteful kettle-drums.
That's right, you rich swine, spatter
my trousers with your splendid
motor - well, what's it matter,
when the clothes on you are old and filthy and
much mended?

56. Untitled typescript notes of a public lecture given by Mason as Burns Fellow in 1962, p.6.

57. P.V.M. Manuscript Book "D", p. [48].

Come, stir your stumps - what is the use
 of cursing rich men? Losses
 are losses - and now where the deuce
 can a cove sleep? Bob dosses
 near here - Lord, what carouses
 we'll have - and Zwei that tosses
 coins for his crust, - and Podge that lives by
 breaking houses.

During the 'thirties Mason became increasingly committed to Marxism. "An Ode Praising Her Conscience" is an example of his proletarian writing and illustrates the weaknesses that are implicit in that genre. In fact, it can be said that Mason's best poetry is his least assured. He seldom writes well when asserting the validity of a single position against all others:

Your conscience is an old black rat with cunning eyes
 that corrodes a summer-house under trees in a garden
 evading in sordid lurking-places
 gnawing in darkness and secrecy, old and furtive
 trapped by no baits:
 but I shall set so many traps about you
 they will surely catch that black rat and at the
 last strangle it.

Let your conscience if you must
 be a field-mouse grain-garnering by day
 among sweet grasses and flowers of the meadow
 his black-tipped nose gilded by buttercup petals
 and specked like a bumble-bee's bottom with flecks
 of golden pollen:
 and in the evening he travels by his soft and
 scented path
 among tangles of yorkshire fog-grass
 to a little home in tall cocksfoot
 and there he sleeps sound all the night.

But now your boasted conscience is nothing but a rat and a
 scab -
 scab ready to work day and night always on the boss's
 job
 a blackleg breaking strikes scabbing on the union
 sprouting more legs on its belly than a centipede
 licking obsequious spittle:
 but I shall set pickets about you
 bearing great banners "death to the rat and scab"
 so many they'll get that conscience
 as it slinks to its dark work in stealth by back-alleys
 and then will he regret his blackness and evasion -
 he may be a basher but those boys are steeled in the
 struggle -
 and the dirty dark hidden alley that has been shelter
 for the traitor
 will do equally well as a grave for the rat and the scab.

May my spirit hover
 above your ways
 to watch over
 all your days

And may the death
 that we have died
 be as the sweet breath
 of a bride.

It should not be thought that Mason was unable to write successful love poetry. In No New Thing there are love poems which reveal a more austere craftsmanship and a sense of absolute poetic authority. The deliberate tone of "She Who Steals", for example, and the refusal to over-state an emotional position make that poem and "Our love was a grim citadel" more effective than the vaguely rhetorical pieces.

In one of his notebooks Mason recorded a judgement about his temperament: "If I formed a political party all by myself I could never be unanimous on any point."⁵⁹

It is a pertinent comment. In the world of paradoxes lies Mason's strength. When his literary intuitions allowed him to record these hesitating and humble explorations of human nature and of a personality besieged by time and chance, he writes with an insight and an urgency which make his poetry of more than local significance.

In the best of his writing Mason is not the founding-father of New Zealand poetry, but a somewhat insecure Prometheus, "... a most human writer", as Baxter has said, "not given to intellectual subtleties, with a bardic energy, able to express the pain and dispossession of modern man ..."⁶⁰

59. Manuscript Book "A", p. [57].

60. A remark made by James K. Baxter in the course of a radio review of Mason's Collected Poems which was broadcast by the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation on the 4th of December, 1963. A typescript copy of this review is in my possession.

3. APPENDICES

(1) The Monro Letter

Harold Monro (1879-1932) established his famous Poetry Bookshop on the ground floor of an eighteenth-century dwelling in Bloomsbury late in 1912. In the second-floor rooms he edited his journal Poetry and Drama (1913-14) and published poetry. Other rooms were rented to impoverished poets (Wilfred Owen, T.E. Hulme, Robert Frost) and the garret was used for public poetry readings.

In July, 1919, Monro issued the first number of his Chapbook which ran to forty issues between that date and July, 1925, when it ceased. In his new journal Monro supported modernist trends and indulged his fancy for discovering new poets.

His letter is dated 27 December, 1924:

Dear Sir, (or - Dear Mason)

The short Christmas holiday at last provides me with an opportunity to write to you. Of course, by now you will have decided that my neglect is due to lack of appreciation or carelessness. By no means. I admit that when I first opened your parcel of 50 copies I felt bored and indifferent, because so much that is worthless is fired in here in such a manner. But when I had read your letter and your printed matter (I can't call it even a book-let) I felt grateful and contented.

I am sorry for you, very; though (is it a platitude?) loneliness is always a good discipline. But that is not the point.

Incidentally I wonder how you came to know of me so well and to realise that if appreciation was to be had it would be from me. Is it through my work as a poet, or as a shopkeeper? Whatever I may be I am not a letter-writer, and I hope that this defect will not have caused you to apply elsewhere.

The poems I like best (taking them in their order in the book are: - After Death. Old Memories of Earth. The Lesser Stars. In Perpetuum Vale. The Miracle of Life (1). The Spark's Farewell. The Latter-Day Geography Lesson.

Now I have mentioned a good number, but I'm not sure that these are the right ones.

The title poem, sure enough, is an expression of the new Charity, and the reaction against the upstart, Pity. It is good enough to annoy most people, but not quite good enough to please those whom it would not annoy. The Agnostic, as you probably know, is an exercise. I like the stanza of After Death, and I like its restraint. The thought has been expressed so many times - yet your expression of it is just different enough to make one like your poem; and the stanza form helps.

Old Memories of Earth. Stanzas 3 & 5. This poem is sentimental of course, but, in spite of prejudice, that is the reason for which I like it. You must not mind this admission, nor spit. It is an achievement on your part, because the poem is quite hard and relentless.

One can spot influences of course. I am conscious of Brooke, and of that Irish poet - can you guess his name if I suggest it in connection with the Lesser Stars?⁶¹ It is more a matter of feeling than of rhythm. All through, by the way, your thought would not impress me so much if it were not for its combination with an inventiveness of rhythm and stanza-form. I say this in spite of the fact that there is a strong affinity between us, and that on the basis of kindred mentality alone,⁶² I could not fail to be sympathetic toward your verse. But I gather that you are conscious of and cultivating the whole art of poetry. I heard a fool say in an after-dinner speech lately something like this: - "The poetry of art is made by poets; the poetry of feeling makes itself." Unfortunately I was the next speaker.

The Lesser Stars is marred by such expressions as "hold high heads", "Times mind we how".⁶³ But here a complicated question is involved.

61. Possibly Oliver St. John Gogarty or James Stephens, but in general, the poetry of J.M. Synge comes closest to Mason's.

62. Like Mason, Monro was of Celtic extraction. His political leanings were left-wing and he believed that poetry is "... the raw and inevitable product of personality ...", Poetry Review, 1 : 313.

63. Mason revised a number of these poems for his 1941 selection This Dark Will Lighten.

In Perpetuum Vale begins splendidly, but, for me, you break up the atmosphere where you begin philosophising, that is throughout the inverted commas. You seem to me quite wrong to revise the epilogue. I think these two stanzas about the best thing in the book - mysterious sombre realism in a strangely successful rhythm.

Now I shall not comment on the whole book simply because I haven't time, and a long letter would give you a wrong impression.

Now I have a great sin to confess. Have you ever been to the Poetry Bookshop? I don't know how much you know of it or of me, or more especially of the Chapbook. This last has had an adventurous career.⁶⁴ I decided to revive it once again as an annual, and, as this, it was published in November. There was no time to reach you by letter, even if I had answered by return. I wanted something of yours. Your booklet could for poetical purposes be considered unpublished. It was a question of choosing among the 6 or 7 poems mentioned above, acting on my own responsibility & risking your objections. Unfortunately I chose the wrong ones - or I am sure you will think so. I don't know how it happened. I began with too little material, & finished with an excess, or I would have put in more of you.

A copy will start on its way to you at the same time as this letter & I shall leave it to you to see what I included. Dont [sic] be angry with me.

Meanwhile I should like to see your Mss. There is no danger of such further occurrence.⁶⁵ If you are as I think you are probably repudiating by now half the poems (or more) that I have mentioned above. But please, in your loneliness, dont [sic] run too fast, or you may lose your breath.

The little book was put on sale in the Shop soon after the Chapbook had appeared, but it did not attract the Christmas crowd. In the New Year I will show it to people.⁶⁶

64. "[The Chapbook] appeared regularly as a monthly journal for approximately the first two years of its life, but by early 1922 it had run into financial difficulties and from that time until its demise in 1925 was published irregularly apparently whenever the material warranted or the spirit moved Harold Monro ...", Robert H. Ross, The Georgian Revolt, 1910-1922, Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Press, 1965, p.169.

65. In fact, Monro included two poems in his Twentieth Century Poetry, London, Chatto and Windus, 1929, without prior reference to Mason.

66. Letter to Mason, 27 December, 1924.

(2) "The Phoenix" Affair.

1931, that unpropitious year, found Mason giving the final touches to his manuscript of No New Thing.

At first he attempted to have the collection published in England, and was prepared to make a number of alterations to the draft of the manuscript if this would make it more acceptable. In a letter to an English publisher he admitted that he was willing to delete a prose prefatory note which he had provided, to tone down any offending references or words, and to adopt a stanza form different from the "hanging indent" style which he was at that time using for all of his poems. He added:

You can rely on a fair number of extraordinary sales owing to the fact that I am a New Zealander. It is so remarkable that anyone here should do anything decent, and I should attract attention in the same way as Dr. Johnson's learned pig.⁶⁷

He added that he hoped to provide, at a later date, the text of a novel and a collection of short stories:

These are pretty well done now in rough fashion but I lack all incentive to lick them into final shape and get them typed. I know that from a sales point of view the prose should precede this book but from a psychological point of view, foolishly enough, I find it impossible. Life is too stagnant.⁶⁸

Life was to become a good deal more exciting later that year when James Bertram invited Mason to take over the editorship of Phoenix - the Auckland University College Literary Magazine which had already run to two issues.⁶⁹

Under its first editor Phoenix was predominantly a literary magazine - its title was taken from D.H. Lawrence and the magazine itself was modelled on John Middleton Murry's

67. To the Editor, Atlantic Monthly Press, 25 November, 1932.

68. *ibid.*

69. This appendix relies to some extent on a typescript headed "Phoenix" found among Mason's papers. A further copy has been lodged in the Hocken Library.

New Adelphi. Under Mason the format and character of Phoenix was altered so that it no longer remained a modernist literary manifesto in a cultural cul-de-sac but became a polemical left-wing journal instead.

Phoenix seems to have been organised and published in a cheerful and haphazard student fashion. Mason recalled, for example, that the Auckland Business Manager so disapproved of the new editorial policy that he did not attend even the occasional meetings which were called.

Mason's prefatory notes in the first number that he edited constitute a policy statement. In trenchant, aphoristic sentences he depicted a society in which "Slowly but steadily comes the advance of bankruptcy, poverty, misery, crime, insanity."⁷⁰ He considered a number of possible remedies:

Optimism? We have turned as many corners as a man in Hampton Court maze and still we are just as lost. We have laughed until the whole country threatens to become one vast giggle-house, and Old Man Necessity simply lands us another grim one on the jaw and growls "Now laugh that off." Moral regeneration? Tell that one to the Mothers' Meeting. Thrift? Tripe. Produce more? The very babes in the cradle give that stuff the raspberry ... every day events thin the ranks of those who believe in the possibility of a return to "business as usual". Every day more deeply grows the feeling that we are in for a crash. Those who think this way are divided into two hostile camps - those who expect a crash with fear and those who look forward to it with hope. The first constitute Fascism, which, under various forms, is making rapid headway, often among people who have never so much as heard the name. The second constitute Communism, which, organised along the familiar lines is advancing steadily among the proletariat and poorest farmers.⁷¹

The contributions in prose and verse to this issue illustrate the new direction taken by the magazine - two of

70. "Notes", Phoenix, 2 No. 1, March, 1933, p [7].

71. *ibid.* p. [8] - [9].

Fairburn's early socialist poems, a eulogy of Marxist art, an article by Clifton Firth on Russian films and Mason's mythic-revolutionary poem "In Manus Tuas Domine" constitute a sufficient sampling.

The number provoked a crisis. The Rev. Martin Sullivan, then President of the Students' Association and recently ordained, entered the printery and read the proofs of the issue before isolating "Groundswell", an article by Eric Cook, as his reason for requiring work to stop. The article in question was a peculiar and dense amalgam of economics, sociology and sexual psychology.

Sullivan refused to listen to Mason's objections which were based on the rights of free speech, and obtained the support of the Committee of the Students' Association for his action. The editor was then forced to exclude the article although he was left free to include a note to the effect that it had been suppressed. As a result of the sensational event the issue sold especially well, while the article in question was still run off and sold separately.

Press reviewers did not welcome the new Phoenix unreservedly. The Auckland Star was relatively restrained:

If ... they wish to make the journal a vehicle of Communist propaganda, they will not only alienate the support which their first efforts promised to enlist, but they will destroy the interest of their own members. For whole pages of this number are as dull as ditchwater.⁷²

Truth was less inhibited. It referred to the "... sneers, jeers, bellicose blasphemies, red rantings and sex-saturated sophistries ..." ⁷³ of the edition.

72. "The Phoenix", Auckland Star, 13 May, 1933.

73. Quoted in "Notes", Phoenix, 2 No. 2, June, 1933, p. [7]

Reviews of this kind and the banning of Cook's article provided a good deal of fuel for Mason's second number which was published in June, 1933. In the middle of a further unrelenting propagandist drive Mason's own delicate love poem, "Be Swift O Sun",⁷⁴ appeared rather out of place.

However, no one could dispute the typographical excellence of the magazine. The printer Bob Lowry, working on an old press at the University, brought a new high standard to ~~printing~~ in this country, but it was largely as a result of his inability to maintain a firm press that the fifth issue of Phoenix never emerged beyond galley form. It was rumoured that the magazine had been suppressed, but the sole reason for its demise was Lowry's withdrawal from the enterprise because of his confused personal and business affairs.

Despite the explicitly radical directions of the journal it seems that Mason still felt unduly restricted in his editorship. In a letter to an enquirer he wrote:

Yes, I am still father to the Phoenix - or, at any rate, am responsible for the juicy bits in it. There is a committee that cramps my style most horribly, or otherwise I should make things really move. As it is, I do all I can in the face of the Students' Association, the Literary Club, the Phoenix Committee, the College Council, the Prof. Board, the University Senate, public opinion, King George, Rex Fairburn, and Jehovah ...

If I did say that an organisation that is not Communist must be Fascist, it was very sensible of me ...⁷⁵

Among student publications, Phoenix, by reason of its typographical excellence, its undomestic concerns and its "Dantonian audacity"⁷⁶ represents an achievement much greater than its four numbers and printing figure of no more than two and a half thousand copies would otherwise lead one to suppose.

74. Published under the title "Amores VI", *ibid.*, p.17.

75. Letter to John Stewart, 10 June, 1933.

76. A phrase used by Mason in his memoir on Phoenix, Mason Papers.

(3) "Why We Can't Write for Nuts"

In the year 1930 R.A.K. Mason wrote a lively account of the New Zealand literary scene. "Why We Can't Write for Nuts",⁷⁷ which remained unpublished, is a bitter indictment of the impoverished nature of our literary criticism and of the puritanism which afflicted our society:

These few jottings are not meant to be a full diagnosis of the reasons why we have not produced more than half-a-dozen well-written books. They are meant merely to stimulate those who are themselves writers and those who wish to help or at any rate do not wish to hinder the creation of an atmosphere of intelligent thought in which great work can readily be done. Of course it will do no good to those who are blandly content to accept mere explanation as excuse ("a very young country, you know" ... "a long way away from the centres of the world's thought, you must understand" ... "difficulties of the early days" ... and so on till it makes you sick). Nor will it benefit the languid and ineffectual intellectual who sees in such evils only one more affliction under which his sorely-burdened soul must agonise. But if you can at once admit the existence of wrong and have spirit enough to see that it should be combated, then you may find these remarks suggestive. In passing I should say that they apply equally well (often more) to the other arts and to the social sciences, and in almost as great a degree to the physical sciences as well.

The gentlemen whose sacred mission it is to direct literary standards in N.Z. (I shall name none - for reasons connected with the law of libel) are for the most part old men (or youths prematurely old) who have never even studied literature deeply. It goes without saying that scarcely one of them could write a decent line himself - they are picked presumably on the general principle that if you can't create anything worth a damn you simply must be able to do criticism. Let us set out a few of the most arrant of their beliefs; and remember that if you think along these lines you may be a good father, a faithful husband, a stout fellow at the club, and the object of respect for all who know you - but you will never even glimpse what great art means, far less be able to take so much as the meanest part in its creation yourself.

77. There is a typescript copy of this article among Mason's papers.

Now the essential canons of this critical code are briefly these (needless to say the pundits cannot see it, and, when taxed, will angrily deny that they hold such theories - the anger of itself goes a long way to prove the rottenness of their position). All literature is divided into two kinds - ancient and modern. All the old is good; every sentence in it (1) easily understandable by even the poorest intelligence, (2) grammatically and structurally in accordance with the best text-books, (3) full of all the nicest ideas nicely adapted for teaching to the tiny tots. The books written nowadays, on the other hand, are nearly all bad. Thank God there are still a few bright cheery optimistic clean-minded essentially English books, but they are few. Most of the modern writers are nasty-minded neurotics, dabblers in sex and free-verse, railers at our established institutions, sceptics, scoffers, iconoclasts, perverse, destructive, and generally unclean. One example: the stage today, it is often implied, is a foul affair - so different from the good old days. Shades of Tourneur, Ford, and Congreve, what sickly cant is this!

This is the atmosphere into which our budding authors are born (of course it prevails everywhere amongst us; the pundits against whom I rail are only a convenient symbol of the general rottenness). No wonder the young writer of promise so rarely fulfils that promise. Some spend years of crude and blind revolt only to lapse into reaction and become themselves the doughtiest champions of the Philistines; others die or stop writing; still others are conquered in soul almost before they have begun to think boldly - it is these whose insipidities continue to swell that almost unmitigated mass of sickliness which we so loftily dub "New Zealand Literature".

It is only out of questioning and free room for the honest expression of doubt that any great art can arise. But we are so conventional and timid; not only must you abide stoutly by all beliefs worshipped of the ignoramus, you must even keep to the orthodox words and ways and shun all suspicion of originality. One example: An editor told me the other day that he would like to print a poem of mine, but dared not. I answered "Hang it, what could be more orthodox? Can't you see it's a strong plea for chastity" (Quaintly enough I happen to support that old-fashioned doctrine even in this age of moving pictures and garbled Freud). He smiled wearily and said: "Yes, but what New Zealander will remain unshocked if you talk of 'the lust of my loins'?"

Furthermore, a man is not only denied rights of free speech, he may not even hint that he may not speak freely. "What, you young cub, you dare to sit by my fire in my house drinking my whisky and deny that you have the full rights of free speech! Why the laws in this country are the most tolerant in the world - like to see other countries letting people talk like we let them talk. What's that you're mumbling? 'Social and economic pressure' - what sort of rot's that? Don't understand the nonsense you're talking, sir. Get out of my house and never darken its doors again - and what's more, never attempt to communicate with my daughter."

That is a scarcely exaggerated specimen of the operation of the social bludgeon. As for economic pressure, well, in almost any job it is a case of "ane toot an' ye're oot". You cannot hope to make tobacco-money in this country by decent writing. Free-lance journalism rarely means anything more than gauging and pandering to the "intellectual wants" of the big advertiser; incidentally, in the matter of encouragement our newspapers rarely give heed to even the wisest words spoken from our own midst, though they will duly waste print on any rot so long as you care to go to Europe and say it. Certainly if you want to keep your soul you can try labouring. Then you may have a chance to discuss matters boldly - and there is the additional advantage that you will be "cut" in the street by the men you went to College with. But the wages are small, and the opportunity for the essential leisure is even smaller.

Well, there it is in brief - and year by year the position grows worse. Such independent spirit as there was in the old days (uncouth maybe, but a potential basis for glorious originality when enlightened) is fast petering out. The wild colonial boy is no more born - Babbitt inherits his land. The fat, stodgy, pudgy little thoughts of Suburbia prevail and swamp out both the native with those of the pioneer and the scholarly courage of the study. To my mind the rising tide should be combated with zeal - with abounding zeal, for the position is desperate. But heigh-ho! maybe it is hopeless; perhaps it is after all better to recognise that it is King Canute's task. But no - that is the coward's way. *Toujours de l'audace, messieurs!* If we are to get anywhere we must develop freedom, and boldness, and vigour in our thinking. Of course fools will interpret this according to their folly. Inevitably such an upsurge would involve an accompaniment of crudeness and clumsiness with outbursts of brutality masquerading as strength - it might possibly mean no more than that.

But certainly our present stagnation is spiritual death. Certainly nothing could be worse than the present position and the existing spirit - this mealy-mouthed, conscience-canting, sickly, mamby-pamby, goody-goody, weak and watery, sheltered school-girl, bourgeois drawing-room, Sunday-school picnic, mothers'-meeting spirit that is all powerful among the generation of today.

(4) Why Mason Stopped Writing

In a letter to Denis Glover Mason himself touched on this subject:

As a matter of fact, one reason - only one - why I gave up writing was that I wanted to bring my artistic feelings into line with my intellectual knowledge.

I fancy I have about got there & in the future hope to publish some reasonably decent proletarian stuff.

It should be done. I have no excuse for stuff of the old defeatist kind, but I do not want to sacrifice quality of form.⁷⁸

It has already been emphasised that it was this very "... stuff of the defeatist kind ..." which became the hall-mark of Mason's literary achievement. In rejecting it, Mason was ignoring the real source of his gifts. To this extent McCormick's diagnosis was correct: "Mason was the supreme poetic casualty in the political strife of the 'thirties."⁷⁹

Yet there were undoubtedly other reasons which contributed to his failure to continue writing poetry.

In his article "A New Zealand Poet"⁸⁰, A.R.D. Fairburn implied that it was the failure of New Zealanders to recognise the talent evident in The Beggar which convinced Mason of the futility of his efforts. When one recalls the faulty marketing of The Beggar and Penny Broadsheet and the troubled publishing history of No New Thing it is easy to account for the disillusionment evident in "Why We Can't Write for Nuts". An oppressive, ungrateful, puritanical society is:

78. 5 November, 1937.

79. McCormick, E.H., New Zealand Literature, London, Oxford 1959, p.117.

80. New Zealand Artists' Annual, 1929, p.69.

... the atmosphere into which our budding authors are born (of course it prevails everywhere amongst us: the pundits against whom I rail are only a convenient symbol of the general rottenness). No wonder the young writer of promise so rarely fulfils that promise. Some spend years of crude and blind revolt only to lapse into reaction and become themselves the doughtiest champions of the Philistines; others die or stop writing; still others are conquered in soul almost before they have begun to think boldly - it is these whose insipidities continue to swell that almost unmitigated mass of sickliness which we so loftily dub "New Zealand Literature".⁸¹

Other reasons are equally possible. In an interview which he gave in Dunedin after he had arrived to take up the Burns Fellowship, Mason was asked this question. He replied "When I was a young man it was all right to starve on a park bench. When I got older, and it became a question of write and starve or work and eat - I worked."⁸²

It is possible, too, that many of the tensions evident in his earliest writing stemmed from his relationship with a possessive mother, and that he finally established his own personality and liberty at the expense of the very tensions which were the root of his art.⁸³

One must also recall that Mason wrote a great deal of prose, and this alone must have sapped his creative energies. In addition to his pamphleteering and journalistic work, Mason wrote some thirty verse plays: he could not have done this without severely curtailing the time he gave to poetry-writing.

Finally, there is an evident truth in Stead's conclusion: "Mason's silence since about 1940 is ... the failure of a gift for which the will could provide no substitute."⁸⁴

81. "Why We Can't Write for Nuts". l.c.

82. "His Literary River Will Flow Again", Dunedin Evening Star, 26 January, 1962.

83. Professor Robert Chapman has maintained this opinion in conversation with the author.

84. op.cit., p.38.

There can be no single answer to the question "Why did Mason stop writing?" Collectively, however, the suggestions tendered above are sufficient to account for the early disappearance of one of the major talents in our literature.

(5) The Verse Plays of R.A.K. Mason

Among his manuscripts Mason has left a brief statement of the origins of his interest in verse plays:

Somewhere about 1928 I began the attempt to proceed from dramatic poetry to poetic drama and continued at odd times for some 15 years.

The first was "Squire Speaks" (published about 10 years later,) ...

From that I proceeded to learn, the two who taught me most being John Millington Synge and Arnold Goodwin.⁸⁵

Synge, by his example, showed me the need to go to the people, share the common speech and common problems.

Arnold taught me partly by advice but more by the tough training of acting under a brilliant producer.

Here I learnt painfully something of writing not mere closet-drama in the manner of Tennyson, but a script for an actual play ...⁸⁶

His new interest took a practical expression in both his play-writing and in his work with the W.E.A. In particular, Mason was a leading figure in the establishment of the People's Theatre and the New Theatre. Moreover, he long agitated for the foundation of a National Theatre.

Among the Mason papers there is a file of completed plays which indicates the extent of his commitment to the theatre. They are:

God in Hell
Spartacus
Some Say This Some Say That
Slump
Senator Epicharus
This Bird May Swing
Refugee (1943)
Escape at all Costs

85. An Auckland Producer.

86. An untitled typescript held among the Mason Papers. Other material also held here includes material relating to a National Theatre, The People's Theatre and the New Theatre.

Rearguard Action
 B.M.A.
 Birthday Gift
 All I Ask Is My Legal Rights
 Set About With Lilies
 Almost a Tragedy
 Toilers Triumphant
 The Gas Goes Out At Ten
 The Banking Buccaneer
 This Monkey Business
 The Man from Verstchaginski
 Strait Is the Gate (produced by William Austin for
 the N.Z.B.C. in 1968)
 Two Other Untitled Plays.

Other plays which should be added to this list include:

International Brigade
 The Dark Will Lighten (a dramatic chorus)
 Skull on Silence

all three of which were published in the People's Voice in the course of 1939, and

Daddy, Paddy and Marty

a one-act farce which appeared in the People's Voice in April, 1950.

One should also include the only plays which Mason produced in a separately-published form:

Squire Speaks: Christchurch; The Caxton Press, 1938.

China: (script for a Dance Drama by Margaret Barr);
 Auckland; printed for the author by the
 Times Printing Works, 1943.

China Dances: Dunedin; printed for the author by John.
 McIndoe, 1962.

The closing paragraphs of Mason's Introduction to China throws some light on his attitude to poetic drama:

To me it seems certain that the majority of our
 people would take as ardent an interest in
 dramatic artistry as do our Maori fellow-citizens:
 provided only that the work was done honestly and
 without condescension by authors and players, and
 that it was progressive both in outlook and
 presentation.

If our poets studied dramatic needs, then not only would that art perhaps benefit, but also it might act as a cross-fertilising agent on poetry: which - despite Verlaine and even possibly at the cost of a slight rash of "Oh, Liberty"'s - could profit by a little rhetoric with its resulting comprehensibility.

In regard to Chinese matters, I can claim no profound knowledge: it will be enough if from here shines forth a little of that glorious spirit of resistance to barbarism which is being shown to-day by so great a part of the human race and is manifest so particularly in the heroic Chinese people.⁸⁷

Mason's work in the field of proletarian drama may well have been at the expense of his poetry.

87. China, p. [1].

(6) Glover's Plans for Mason's "Collected Poems"

A series of letters from Glover to Mason during 1956 and 1957 seem to have prepared the way for the publication of Mason's Collected Poems in 1962. They reveal Mason's reluctance as much as Glover's exuberance:

There's so much interest in your verse, bubbling up now as ever but more like a good yeasty brew, that you positively have a public duty to see that something is done about it. I suggest a definitive edition, so easily put together, such a sure winner as a publishers' risk ...

Why don't you write to Caxton and ask them to do it in a reasonable time. If they won't you can make it quite clear that you have other plans. Confidentially, it's me that has the other plans.

Tom said, sincerely or not, that you were surprised at the interest. You are the last to be so. The edition must be done; and it is properly a Caxton responsibility. If they hedge at it, I'm in - but in the sacred name of Mah-Jongg don't tell nobody of this, Not yet.

Understand that yr Chinese Fulbrights Bertram & Buchanan have been refused leave by V.U.C. and that the students are foaming - this, that is, when they have finished tournament & procesh & capping etc.

K. sends all fair greeting. So do I, with the injunction that lawn cemetery grass shd be trained to grow downwards ...⁸⁸

Almost four months later Glover wrote a second letter to follow-up his original proposal:

I can't think what cataclysm has struck Auckland that I should be favoured within 3 months of a reply from you. Unprecedented, my dear sir, unprecedented!

Now the fact is, the lack of an agreement notwithstanding, Caxton have the copyright of This Dark as it is in present form. It may mean nothing to them; but out of jealousy of me they wd certainly block any attempt to reprint, even if not interested themselves - if they knew what I may be up to

There is not only a moral but a more or less legal obligation to consult them. It must be done in such a way as to frighten them off, into acquiescence without giving anything away.

I know you are willing to drop the spade, & unwilling to assume the pen; but a letter such as I have drafted shd be sent forthwith ...

... what I am anxious for is a reasonably definitive Mason, including all sorts of things you may have in yr glory-box - and wh you would perhaps, without prejudice, allow myself &, say Jim Bertram, to take a look at, if you have any doubts yourself.

Myself, I doubt your doubts. Oils & Ointments & A Doubt (both from the Penny Pamphlet) do not appear in This Dark; and they are both good Mason. And what of the mysterious Beggar?

For God's sake, bestir yourself; it's no good just poking sticks at an existing collection, deleting here & adding there. Let's go into the whole thing...⁸⁹

To emphasise the urgency of the project, Glover wrote again the very next day:

No procrastinating, no fiddling about!.. You get yourself in the clear with Caxton! No talk of a collected Mason, which might tempt them - just the quam celerrime reprint, which I'm betting won't. You see, it is compulsory to send 2 copies of all books to the Gen. Ass. Library; and this is automatic copyright in all countries signatory to the Berne Convention. So that Caxton have the copyright of This Dark, which we must obliquely persuade them to relinquish. My guess is that D.D. hates poetry & is continually embarrassed by laudatory references to myself. Caxton must be brain-washed of Glover, & Curnow - oh yes, Curnow!

On the other hand they may also be jealous of the inroads of Pegasus in good production.

So it remains to frighten them off.

Heigh-ho - I feel Lake Success is calling ...⁹⁰

89. Letter from Glover, 22 July, 1956.

90. Letter from Glover, 23 July, 1956.

Just over three months later Glover seems to have resigned himself to something less than immediate action:

Hey mister! How you get on, eh? You take the big step in the frontward direction for to get the pukapuka in print.

Your collie Mr. Gullible he ver' interest and still think your poetries desirable.

Please by favour of esteemed reply ...⁹¹

This one-sided correspondence continued into 1957, when Glover proposed bringing Curnow in as editor:

You dig up the Esplanade
Your shovel holding tight
And you drink down lemonade
But never a word you write.

... the collected poems ... Curnow has been staying with me briefly, and I have put it to him that he should see you with the purpose of editing the whole thing. I am sure you would be willing to accept Allen in this capacity, and it would take the whole tedious business off your hands, thereby freeing you for the more creative work of doing kind hearts & coronets in begonias and parsley, tastefully edged with appropriately shaped pipi-shell borders. Further, I have suggested to Allen a reasonably brief critical foreword. Nobody could do it better and nobody has such an old and close interest in all you have written ...

I have set my (few remaining) teeth on this job. Allen says it will take him perhaps 6 months. But at present rate of progress this is whizzing progress...⁹²

R.A.K. Mason's Collected Poems, with an introduction by Allen Curnow, was finally published by the Pegasus Press, Christchurch, in 1962, "in conjunction with Denis Glover ..."⁹³

91. Letter from Glover, 27 October, 1956.

92. Letter from Glover, 3 February, 1957.

93. Publisher's note in R.A.K. Mason's Collected Poems, Christchurch, The Pegasus Press, 1962. p. [4].

(7) "We Speak Our Own Words" - Mason's Proposed
Anthology of New Zealand Verse

During the nineteen-sixties Mason planned a number of literary undertakings, few of which eventuated. One of these was to be an anthology of New Zealand verse, selected by himself and published by Pegasus Press under the title "We Speak Our Own Words".

A consideration of the notes he wrote to outline his projected anthology throws some light on Mason's allegiances as a poet and his tastes as a critic. He believed that his anthology would have a number of special features. From this point on I cite his notes:⁹⁴

- 1) It is the first national anthology to be published in New Zealand.

This is only fair recognition of the work that New Zealand publishers have done in forwarding the cause of individual poets.

From the more selfish viewpoint of the writers, it gives them greater opportunity to express their personal viewpoints with the editor. Wherever possible, the poet himself will be consulted as to desirability in selection and his viewpoint preferred. Even in the case of dead writers, this principle will apply (e.g., Fairburn's "The Cave").

From the reader's viewpoint, this should add interest and variety.

- 2) While standard English is adopted as the common language, full consideration is given for the first time to other languages -

- a) The Scots Tongue

Without going into the vexed question of whether or not this constitutes a separate "language", full credit is given (with examples) to the work of such men as Barr of Craigielea in founding modern New Zealand poetry. The parallel importance of the Welsh and Irish literary revivals

94. "Notes for A.W. [Albion Wright, Managing-Director of Pegasus Press, Christchurch] re. proposed anthology.", 16 March, 1964.

is made clear. The work of such people as Professor Joan Stevens in elucidation is treated and cases like Denis Glover, Eileen Duggan, James Baxter and the editor himself are cited. Reference, with example, is made to the influence of Gaelic.

b) The Maori Language

i) Classical

This is briefly handled - for the first time in an anthology - by Curnow. As usually in his anthology, the handling is clumsy, with a vast preponderance of explanation over actual handling. This fault should be avoided throughout and illustrations should far exceed explanations.

So far as possible, the best-laid paths should be followed, irrespective of whether or not they have been used before. For instance, Sir George Grey's version of the Hinemoa legend makes no attempt at poetic form. Nevertheless, it is probably the best version.

N.B.: Classical Maori actually exceeds the general time-limit of the book (viz. Nineteenth Century and after), but some free rein should be given here because

- a) no simple outline has previously been given in such general form;
- b) the actual translations fall within the period. For this whole question of Translations, see separate Note below.

ii) Post European

In other anthologies, no clear indication has been given that good composition in Maori flourished during the nineteenth century and indeed continues to-day. Yet, Dr. Skinner, of the Otago Museum, assures me that he has 2,000 versions of high poetic value. Translations have been made in a number of cases and would doubtless be available for selection by the editor.

3) Women

Fuller recognition is given to the part played by women in the history of poetry, as of our people. Thus, Jessie Mackay is taken as the pivotal point of our European poetry as Puhiwahine is of our Maori. We see in Jessie Mackay the difficulties of establishment after the pioneer period - the continual harking back after a past in Scotland that she cannot recapture, the broad attempt to embrace all the features of the new land - landscape, Maori legend, social stirrings that include Scottish and Irish nationalist ferment, labour and humanitarian legislation, women's rights, etc. Her work as a forerunner is shown in her poetry both by its aspirations and achievements.

The heroic part played by our women is also indicated, as far as can properly be done, in the work of such handicapped women as Robin Hyde and Gloria Rawlinson. In this connection, see also next note.

- 4) The part, often a heroic part, played by our poets and translators in the life of the community, both as writers and as individuals, is fully brought out. Obvious cases in point are Grey, Fitzgerald, Domett, Reeves, Tregear, Ngata, Buck, Alley, Glover, Curnow, etc.

Others who would appear are Te Heheu and Te Rauparaha (say in the versions by James Cowan and Thomas Bracken - see Alexander and Currie's anthology - New Zealand Verse, 1st edition, pp. 133 and 140, together with their Notes). Indeed, this aspect of Maoridom, together with most others, would be represented now for the first time in modern guise.

As indicated in 3) above, women would come in for their full share in this appreciation.

- 5) In connection with this point, the role of poetry in making the modern Trade Union and Labour Movement should be brought out - the frequent use of quotation by Labour orators, the reciprocal influence of poetry and oratory, the Liberal-Labour poets as mentioned above, the appearance of actual Labour poets. Names in this connection would be Semple, Lee, Holland. The latter should, for the first time in a general anthology be given his rightful place as a poet of consequence in his own right (Red Roses Along the Highway).

In regard to actual worker-poets, instances are numerous. The influence of David McKee Wright on so-called Australian poetry should be brought out.

In regard to the whole matter, Alexander and Currie could well be quoted or cited at various points, for instance:

Introduction, p.XIII, 1st edition: "In these islands ... there has existed right from the very beginning a tradition that it was a good thing to write poetry. The tradition has grown with the years". (This might well be used, of course with permission, as one of the epigraphs.)

Again pp. XV and XVI: -

"Of the writers in this book, with one or two exceptions, none are by profession literary people ... As their professions go, perhaps the greater part are journalists, editors, reporters, free-lancers; one of them rose to be a war-correspondent ... There are also lawyers, not a few, and some of the best of the writers have been politicians - walking after Domett, who was Premier and poet and pressman, all three ... There are inevitably, three or four Civil Servants in the list, two or three clergymen, and the rest are for the most part settlers, settlers' wives and sons and daughters, miners, shepherds and rabbiters, landholders large and small ... A fair proportion of these makers are women ..."

I may comment that the list to-day would be much along the same lines. The advance of education would give more scope for students and teachers, including University teachers, but the generally inculcated idea that New Zealand poetry is primarily a University affair should be subtly made to appear ludicrous.

That anthology would certainly have been a highly idiosyncratic affair. It reveals at the same time Mason's various prejudices and his undeveloped critical instinct, and shows that he was both unfamiliar with and unsympathetic to the contemporary literary scene in this country.

4. A CHECKLIST OF THE UNPUBLISHED POETRY MANUSCRIPTS AMONG
MASON'S PAPERS

Abbreviations used in the following entries:

P.C.P. - "Poems Complete but Mainly of Pathological
Interest Only".
P.U. - "Poems Uncompleted".
P. - "Poems"
P. to F. - "Poems to Finish".
U.S. - "Unpublished Sonnets - Not to Publish".
O. & E. - "Poems - Odds and Ends"
J.P. - "Jottings path. only"
P.V.M. - "Prose-Verse Miscellany"
S.N.B. - "Small Note-Book"

"Ad Regem" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
Title: AD REGEM. / To R.F.
First line: They set up monuments on some public site
Collation: 1 *sheet* of notepaper. P.C.P.
Date: [1924-25]
Contents: Carbon copy typescript of completed poem,
3 stanzas of 4 lines each.

"After Atom Bomb" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
Title: AFTER ATOM BOMB
First line: The moon resumes the field
Collation: 1 *sheet* of notepaper.
Date: [1962-63]
Contents: Typescript of completed poem, 2 stanzas of
4 lines each.

"Against John
Knox" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
Title: AGAINST JOHN KNOX
First line: All the farewells are said,
Collation: 1 *sheet* of notepaper
Date: [1962-63]
Contents: Carbon copy draft of poem, 4 stanzas of 6
lines each; 1 emendation and several
corrections in pencil.

"All Are One" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
Title: ALL ARE ONE
First line: All are one and we hold the globe in common,
Collation: 1 *sheet* of notepaper
Date: [1962-63]
Contents: Carbon copy typescript of completed sonnet.

"All in a Black
and Bitter Mood" A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
Title: [All in a Black and Bitter Mood]
First line: All in a black and bitter mood
Collation: P.U., p. [3]
Date: [1930-33]
Contents: Manuscript draft of untitled, uncompleted
poem, 3 stanzas of varying lengths and one
additional line.

- "America"
 Title: America
 First line: Common blood and common tongue
 Collation: P., p. [3]
 Date: [1923]
 Contents: Manuscript draft of uncompleted poem, 7 lines and a list of possible rhymes.
- "And in this flux ..."
 Title: A. and T.ms. 1 p. (purple ribbon and Mason's hand in ink)
 First line: [And in this flux ...]
 Collation: And in this flux truth comes, truth goes, 1 *sheet* of notepaper, P. to F.
 Date: [1924-27]
 Contents: Draft of completed but untitled poem, 6 stanzas of 4 lines each.
- "Bags Dog Boat"
 Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 First line: BAGS DOG BOAT
 Collation: The bags are locked, the labels clear, 1 *sheet* of notepaper
 Date: [1962-63]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of completed poem, 5 stanzas of varying lengths. T.I. "5"
- "Battle of the Sexes"
 Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 First line: BATTLE OF THE SEXES
 Collation: "I'll watch you're not hurt", said the Old Champ and bent 1 *sheet* of note-paper
 Date: [1962-63]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of completed sonnet. T.I. "7"
- "Be on your way..." T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: [BE ON YOUR WAY ...]
 First line: "Be on your way, my man," she said,
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of note-paper
 Date: [1962-63]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of untitled poem, 18 lines in couplets.
- "Bethlehem"
 Title: A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in ink)
 First line: Bethlehem
 Collation: As you, or I or any one of us - 1 *sheet* of letter-paper. P.C.P.
 Date: [1923]
 Contents: Manuscript of completed poem, 3 stanzas of 4 lines each.

"Blaiklock at the
Judgement of
Bacchus"

T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
Title: BLAIKLOCK AT THE JUDGMENT OF BACCHUS
First line: Here at the winter day's cool funeral
Collation: 1 *sheet* of note-paper. U.S.
Date: [1923-24]
Contents: Typescript of completed sonnet.

"Call Off the
Cops"

T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
Title: CALL OFF THE COPS.
First line: I won an hour from old Time yesterday -
Collation: 1 *sheet* of note-paper. U.S.
Date: [1923-28]
Contents: Typescript of completed sonnet.

"Charity"

A.ms. 2p. (Mason's hand in ink)
Title: CHARITY
First line: Loud rolls the organ its resonant chaunt
Collation: 2 *sheet* of note-paper. P.C.P.
Date: [1920-21]
Contents: Manuscript of completed poem, 5 stanzas of
4 lines each, 1 of 6 lines.

"Charon Alone..."

A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
Title: [CHARON ALONE ...]
First line: Charon alone hath substance in that realm
Collation: O. & E., p. [5]
Date: [1923-24]
Contents: Manuscript draft of untitled, uncompleted
poem, 1 stanza of 5 lines, 1 of 6 lines,
and an unfinished stanza of 3 lines.

"A Charming Young
Lady Called
Eccles"

A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
Title: [A CHARMING YOUNG LADY CALLED ECCLES]
First line: A charming young lady called Eccles
Collation: O. & E., p. [22]
Date: [1922-23]
Contents: Autograph copy of completed but untitled
limerick.

"Cling ..."

A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in ink)
Title: [CLING ...]
First line: Cling; let not the foul-eyed crowd
Collation: 1 *sheet* of note-paper. P. to F.
Date: [1940-41]
Contents: Manuscript draft of untitled, uncompleted
poem, 4 stanzas of varying lengths.

"Comment Cynical"

A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in ink)
Title: Comment Cynical
First Line: Golden the masts were and the cordage silk;
Collation: 1 *sheet* of letter-paper. P. to F.
Date: [1933-35]
Contents: Manuscript draft of uncompleted poem, 4
stanzas of 4 lines each and one additional
line.

- "Dawn on Our Land" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: DAWN ON OUR LAND
 First line: The brimming bowl of morning spills
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of note-paper
 Date: [1962-63]
 Contents: Carbon copy draft of uncompleted poem, 2 stanzas of 6 lines each.
- "The Dead Warrior" A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in ink)
 Title: The Dead Warrior
 First line: He was always a bloody waster
 Collation: O. & E., p. [33]
 Date: [1924-25]
 Contents: Manuscript of untitled poem, 4 lines
- "Death Came in
 Quest of Me" A.ms., 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
 Title: [DEATH CAME IN QUEST OF ME]
 First line: Death came in quest of me
 Collation: O. & E., p. [15]
 Date: [1920]
 Contents: Manuscript draft of untitled, uncompleted poem, 2 stanzas of 6 lines each. B.l. V [ery] O [ld]".
- "Dejected in Defeat
 When Having Nothing
 to Assault" A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in ink)
 Title: Dejected in Defeat When Having Nothing to Assault
 First line: I send my mind a quest early & late,
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of note-paper. U.S.
 Date: 1923
 Contents: Manuscript of completed sonnet, including several variants. T.r. "November, 1923".
- "Do We Not Wrong
 Our Dead" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: [DO WE NOT WRONG OUR DEAD]
 First line: Do we not wrong our dead
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of note-paper
 Date: [1962-63]
 Contents: Typescript of completed but untitled poem, 2 stanzas of 4 lines each.
- "The Dismissal" A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in ink)
 Title: The Dismissal
 First line: I looked into her lordly eyes
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of note-paper. P.C.P.
 Date: [1923]
 Contents: Manuscript of completed poem, 2 stanzas of 4 lines each.
- "Does Not Your
 Sluggard Pulse
 Redouble" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: [DOES NOT YOUR SLUGGARD PULSE REDOUBLE]
 First line: Does not your sluggard pulse redouble
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of note-paper
 Date: [1932-36]
 Contents: Typescript of completed but untitled poem, 4 stanzas of 4 lines each.

- "Each gat a filthy
litter"
A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in ink)
Title: [EACH GAT A FILTHY LITTER]
First line: Each gat a filthy litter
Collation: P., p. [7]
Date: [1923]
Contents: Manuscript copy of untitled quatrain;
other jottings below.
- "Failure"
T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
Title: FAILURE
First line: As I passed the old house just now,
Collation: 1 *sheet* of typing paper. P.C.P.
Date: [1929-30]
Contents: Typescript of completed poem, 4 stanzas of
7 lines each.
- "Fearing lest..."
A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in ink)
Title: [FEARING LEST ...]
First line: Fearing lest the breached wall provide an entry
Collation: 1 *sheet* of letter-head paper. T.F.
Date: [1930-34]
Contents: Manuscript draft of untitled uncompleted
poem, 2 stanzas of 4 lines each.
- "The First Thing..."
A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
Title: [THE FIRST THING ...]
First line: The first thing that a man does is to cry
Collation: 1 *sheet* of torn note-paper. J.P.
Date: [1926-28]
Contents: Manuscript draft of untitled uncompleted
poem, 2 stanzas of 4 lines each.
- "The Fool Hath
Said"
A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
Title: THE FOOL HATH SAID
First line: Comrades revel in the cheer
Collation: O. & E., p. [14]
Date: [1920]
Contents: Manuscript draft of uncompleted poem, 9
couplets and 1 other line. B.1.
"V[ery] O[ld]".
- "From the French"
T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
Title: FROM THE FRENCH
First line: In the queen's house are treasures she does
not regard:
Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
Date: [1923-29]
Contents: Carbon copy typescript of completed sonnet.
T.1. "2".
- "From the Greek"
T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
Title: FROM THE GREEK
First line: Serene as evening when the winds are still
Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
Date: [1930-32]
Contents: Typescript of completed poem, 1 stanza of
4 lines.

- "Gaudeo Quod
Nescio" A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in ink)
Title: Gaudeo Quod Nescio
First line: They urge on me for worship and for praise
Collation: 1 sheet of lined note-paper. U.S.
Date: 1923
Contents: Manuscript copy of completed sonnet. T.r.
"October, 1923".
- "The Greedy Earth" A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in ink)
Title: [THE GREEDY EARTH ...]
First line: The greedy earth so ravenously gapes
Collation: 1 ~~sheet~~ of note-paper. P.C.P.
Date: [1923-24]
Contents: Manuscript of completed but untitled poem,
2 stanzas of 8 and 9 lines respectively.
- "Had I Known ..." A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
Title: [HAD I KNOWN]
First line: Had I known the trick Fate had in store
Collation: O. & E., p. [24]
Date: [1922-23]
Contents: Manuscript draft of untitled uncompleted
poem, 2 stanzas of 4 lines each and one
uncompleted stanza of 2 lines.
- "Here Are We Men" A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
Title: [HERE ARE WE MEN]
First line: Here are we men
Collation: O. & E., p. [27]
Date: [1923-24]
Contents: Manuscript draft of uncompleted, untitled
poem, 8 4-lined stanzas, 1 of 3 lines.
T.r. "N.B.G."
- "Here Night ..." T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
Title: [HERE NIGHT ...]
First line: Here night and his hordes immense
Collation: 1 sheet of unlined orange paper. P. to F.
Date: [1940-41]
Contents: Typescript draft of untitled uncompleted
poem, 12 lines. Closes with two prose
sentences.
- "Here Night ..." T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
Note: Identical in all other respects.
- "He Was Only a
Common A.B." A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in ink)
Title: [HE WAS ONLY A COMMON A.B.]
First line: He was only a common A.B.
Collation: 1 torn ~~sheet~~ of note-paper
Date: [1924-26]
Contents: Manuscript draft of untitled uncompleted poem,
(written against Blaiklock). 1 stanza of
10 lines.

- "Here on This Barren
Hill ..."
Title: A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
[HERE ON THIS BARREN HILL ...]
First line: Here on this barren hill I wring a crust
Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
Date: [1940-42]
Contents: Manuscript of completed but untitled poem,
4 stanzas of 5 lines each.
- "Honour, Virtue,
Duty Failing"
Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
[HONOUR, VIRTUE, DUTY FAILING]
First line: Honour, virtue, duty failing
Collation: 1 sheet of orange typing paper. T.F.
Date: [1940-41]
Contents: Carbon copy typescript of untitled
uncompleted poem, 1 stanza of 6 lines,
1 of 5 lines.
- "I Cannot See ..."
Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
[I CANNOT SEE ...]
First line: I cannot see beyond this one clear end:
Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
Date: [1940-41]
Contents: Carbon copy typescript of untitled poem, 1
stanza of 8 and 1 stanza of 6 lines;
1 correction in ink.
- "I Have Blent ..."
Title: A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in ink)
[I HAVE BLENT ...]
First line: I have blent to make my rule
Collation: O. & E., p. [38]
Date: [1930-32]
Contents: Manuscript of untitled poem, 4 lines
- "I Heard ..."
Title: A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
[I HEARD ...]
First line: I heard the old buggers say as they sat in
the ingle
Collation: Scrap of lined note-paper. T.F.
Date: [1940-41]
Contents: Manuscript of untitled and uncompleted poem,
2 stanzas of 4 lines each.
- "I Took My Body
and My Soul"
Title: A.ms. 2 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
[I TOOK MY BODY AND MY SOUL]
First line: I took my body and my soul
Collation: O. & E., p. [25]
Date: [1922-23]
Contents: Manuscript of untitled poem, 9 stanzas of
varying lengths.
- "If He's In
Heaven..."
Title: A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in ink)
[IF HE'S IN HEAVEN ...]
First line: If he's in Heaven, said Happy Harry,
Collation: O. & E., p. [33]
Date: [1924-25]
Contents: Manuscript of 4-lined poem.

"If in Future Ages" A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
 Title: [IF IN FUTURE AGES]
 First line: If in future ages
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper. J.P.
 Date: [1930-32]
 Contents: Manuscript of untitled poem, 2 stanzas of
 3 and 4 lines respectively. (Possibly
 intended as epigraph to No New Thing).

"If You Like This
 Book ..."
 A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
 Title: [IF YOU LIKE THIS BOOK ...]
 First line: If you like this book no need to recommend it
 Collation: O. & E., p. [18]
 Date: [1922-23]
 Contents: Manuscript of 2-lined epigram.

"Jolly Little
 Judas ..."
 A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
 Title: [JOLLY LITTLE JUDAS ...]
 First line: Jolly little Judas came jogging up to Calvary
 Collation: P.V.M., p. [20]
 Date: [1923]
 Contents: Manuscript of untitled poem, 2 stanzas of
 4 lines each.

"Lady Here I Take
 My Station"
 A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
 Title: [LADY HERE I TAKE MY STATION]
 First line: Lady here I take my station
 Collation: O. & E., p. [17]
 Date: [1920-22]
 Contents: Manuscript draft of untitled poem, 6 stanzas
 of varying lengths.

"Like a Dark Bitter Wind
 That Blows"
 A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
 Title: [LIKE A DARK BITTER WIND THAT BLOWS]
 First line: Like a dark bitter wind that blows
 Collation: O. & E., p. [29]
 Date: [1922-24]
 Contents: Manuscript draft of untitled, uncompleted
 poem, 2 completed and 1 uncompleted stanza,
 as well as additional notes and lines.

"Like a Great
 Silent Hound"
 A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in ink)
 Title: [LIKE A GREAT SILENT HOUND]
 First line: Like a great silent hound
 Collation: 1 sheet of lined note-paper. J.P.
 Date: [1922-23]
 Contents: Manuscript of untitled poem, 2 stanzas of
 6 lines each; in margin, 2 drawings of
 human heads.

"Lord, Lord ..."
 A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
 Title: [LORD, LORD ...]
 First line: Lord, Lord I am white with standing at the helm
 Collation: O. & E., p. [36]
 Date: [1923-24]
 Contents: Manuscript of untitled uncompleted poem; 2
 stanzas of 8 lines each.

- "Morbidity" A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
 Title: Morbidity
 First line: I cannot see an upturned nail
 Collation: O & E., p. [31]
 Date: [1922-24]
 Contents: Manuscript of poem, 3 stanzas of 3 lines each.
- "Motor-trip" A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
 Title: Motor-trip
 First line: We for an instant (at the top) made a stop
 Collation: P.U., p. [11]
 Date: [1924-28]
 Contents: Manuscript draft of uncompleted poem, 1 stanza of 5, 3 of 4 lines.
- "New Fruit From Old Stocks" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: NEW FRUIT FROM OLD STOCKS
 First line: This is the book which I have written well
 Collation: 1 strip of typing paper. P.C.P.
 Date: [1930-33]
 Contents: Typescript of 2-lined verse epigram (intended as epigraph to No New Thing); 1 correction in ink. T.C. "Title Page". B.l. Mason's signature in ink.
- "New Zealand All Over" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: NEW ZEALAND ALL OVER
 First line: I took my love to a lost vale
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1962-64]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of completed poem, 5 stanzas of 3 lines each.
- "News Along the Sea-Coast" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: NEWS ALONG THE SEA-COAST.
 First line: The Woman: "Travelled by the sea-coast way,"
 Collation: 1 sheet of letter-head paper. P.C.P.
 Date: [1923-24]
 Contents: Typescript of completed poem, 4 stanzas of 4 lines each. Verso: "Leighton Laboratories."
- "O -- of Kings..." A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
 Title: [O -- OF KINGS ...]
 First line: O -- of kings why do you weep at evening
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper. P.C.P.
 Date: [1924-25]
 Contents: Manuscript draft of uncompleted poem, 4 stanzas of 4 lines each; several emendations and corrections.

- "An Ode Praising
Her Conscience"
Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
AN ODE PRAISING HER CONSCIENCE
First line: Your conscience is an old black rat with
cunning eyes
Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
Date: [1938-42]
Contents: Typescript of completed poem, 3 stanzas of
varying lengths.
- "On a Certain
Newspaper"
Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
ON A CERTAIN NEWSPAPER
First line: Winds roar, seas rage, skies fall ... nothing
dismays me
Collation: 1 ~~sheet~~ of letter-paper
Date: [1923]
Contents: Typescript of completed epigrams, 2 lines.
Presented together with 4 other epigrams:
On Christ; On a Golden Crucifix;
Politics; Remedium Amoris. Verso:
"Leighton Laboratories"
- "On Christ"
Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
ON CHRIST
First line: He died in beating back the rich
Collation: as above
Date: [1923]
Contents: Typescript of 4-lined epigram
- "On a Golden
Crucifix"
Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
ON A GOLDEN CRUCIFIX
First line: The patient Christ upon the golden cross
Collation: as above
Date: [1923]
Contents: Typescript of 4-lined epigram.
- "On a Golden
Crucifix"
Title: A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
[ON A GOLDEN CRUCIFIX]
First line: The patient Christ upon the golden cross
Collation: P.V.M., p. [18]
Date: [1923]
Contents: Manuscript copy of completed epigram (as
above) T.R. "23/5/23"
- "Place a
Branch ..."
Title: A.ms. 1 p (Mason's hand in pencil)
[PLACE A BRANCH ...]
First line: Place a branch upon the grave
Collation: A scrap of paper
Date: [1928]
Contents: Manuscript copy of 4-lined poem.

- "Politics" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: POLITICS
 First line: On hearing Mugg, the socialist M.P.,
 Collation: A scrap of paper
 Date: [1923]
 Contents: Typescript of 4-lined epigram.
- "Quand Tu Seras
 Vieille" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: QUAND TU SERAS VIEILLE
 First line: "Old, you'll answer back the radio"
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1962-63]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of completed poem,
 4 stanzas of varying lengths; 1 emendation.
- "A Racing Buick..." A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in ink)
 Title: [A RACING BUICK ...]
 First line: A racing Buick shot by me
 Collation: O. & E., p. [34]
 Date: [1923-25]
 Contents: Manuscript of uncompleted poem, 2 stanzas of
 4 lines each.
- "The Railway-
 porter" A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in ink)
 Title: The Railway-porter
 First line: Then for the first time in his life he knew
 that his eye was vapid.
 Collation: O. & E., p. [35]
 Date: [1923-25]
 Contents: Manuscript draft of uncompleted poem, 2
 stanzas of 3 lines each, 1 stanza of 4
 lines.
- "Raise your
 hand ..." A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
 Title: [RAISE YOUR HAND ...]
 First line: Raise your hand to stroke your hair
 Collation: O. & E., p. [13]
 Date: [1923-24]
 Contents: Manuscript draft of uncompleted poem, 11 lines.
- "Remedium Amoris" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: REMEDIUM AMORIS
 First line: "Where" cried the lover, "can a cure for
 love's wound be found."
 Collation: as above.
 Date: [1923]
 Contents: Typescript of 4-lined epigram
- "Reunion" T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
 Title: REUNION
 First line: The snow is soft
 Collation: 1 ~~sheet~~ of typing paper
 Date: [1962-63]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of completed poem,
 3 stanzas of 4 lines each.

- "Revolution"
 Title: A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
 Revolution
 First line: Split the sacred veils asunder
 Collation: P.U., p. [33]
 Date: [1924-28]
 Contents: Manuscript draft of uncompleted poem, 4
 stanzas of 3 lines each.
- "Say What you
 like ..."
 Title: A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in ink)
 [SAY WHAT YOU LIKE ...]
 First line: Say what you like the funniest thing is the
 human
 Collation: 1 ~~sheet~~ of note-paper
 Date: [1928-32]
 Contents: Manuscript draft of uncompleted poem, 4
 lines. Below, lengthened draft of 6 lines.
- "The Scabrous Hand
 and Three
 Daffodils"
 Title: A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
 The Scabrous Hand and Three Daffodils
 First Line: They have brought the scabrous man three
 daffodils:
 Collation: P.U., p. [15]
 Date: [1924-28]
 Contents: Manuscript draft of uncompleted poem, 2
 stanzas of 4 lines each, 1 stanza of 2
 lines. Includes prose note on eczema.
- "The Searcher
 After Truth"
 Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
THE SEARCHER AFTER TRUTH
 First line: When, though I pore on pithed philosophies
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper. U.S.
 Date: [1923-24]
 Contents: Typescript of completed sonnet, 1 emendation
 in black ink.
- "The Searcher
 After Truth"
 Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
Note: otherwise identical with above.
- "Simon the
 Cyrenian Speaks"
 Title: A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
 Simon the Cyrenian Speaks
 First line: "At first I said I will not bear
 Collation: S.N.B., p. [11]
 Date: [1924-25]
 Contents: Manuscript draft of uncompleted poem, 1 stanza
 of 4 lines, 1 of 3. Below this is copied
 1 stanza of Eileen Duggan's "A New Zealand
 Christmas".

- "The Singing and
The Silence"
Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)
First line: THE SINGING AND THE SILENCE
Collation: As moths that yacht-like glide on a mirror's
Date: margin
Contents: 1 sheet of typing paper
[1962-63]
Typescript of completed poem, 5 stanzas of
4 lines each.
- "The Song of a
Lone Garrison"
Title: A.ms. 2 p. (Mason's hand in ink)
First line: The Song of a Lone Garrison
Collation: The gods have made and the gods will wreck;
Date: 2 ~~sheets~~ of lined writing paper
Contents: 1924
Manuscript draft of completed poem, 3 stanzas
of 8, 9 and 11 lines respectively.
B.r. "2/1/24". (Earlier draft of "Sonnet
on Brotherhood"?) Several emendations and
corrections in ink.
- "A Sonnet"
Title: A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in ink)
First line: A SONNET (To a Woman Comrade)
Collation: Fine's the machine: uses innumerable
Date: 1 sheet of typing paper
Contents: (1938-42)
Manuscript drafts of sonnet; several
corrections and emendations in ink.
- "Were My Body ..."
Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
First line: [WERE MY BODY ...]
Collation: Were my body sick, you'd come to me and say,
Date: 1 ~~sheet~~ of typing paper. U.S.
Contents: (1923-24)
Typescript of completed sonnet.
- "Sonnet 12"
Title: A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
First line: Sonnet 12
Collation: Who takes considerance for that excrement
Date: 1 ~~sheet~~ of note-paper. U.S.
Contents: [1923-24]
Manuscript draft of sonnet
- "Sonnet 12"
Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
First line: Sonnet 12
Collation: Who takes considerance for that excrement
Date: 1 sheet of typing paper, unevenly torn.
Contents: [1923-24]
Manuscript draft of sonnet; 1 emendation in
ink; 1 vertical line drawn against the
text to align it with the hanging indent
style.

"Stray Thoughts Beyond

Good and Evil" A.ms. 1 p. (purple ribbon)
 Title: Stray Thoughts Beyond Good and Evil
 First line: This is our sort; no thing abides
 Collation: 1 sheet of note-paper. P.to F.
 Date: [1930-31]
 Contents: Draft of uncompleted poem, 7 typed 3-lined
 stanzas, 2 stanzas in ink; 1 correction
 Stanzas numbered in ink.

"Stray Thoughts Beyond

Good and Evil"

Note: An earlier draft of above - 3
 5-lined stanzas written in pencil
 on half-page of lined paper.

"Summer's When the

Roses Blow" A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in ink)
 Title: [SUMMER'S WHEN THE ROSES BLOW]
 First line: Summer's when the roses blow
 Collation: 1 sheet of lined paper. J.P.
 Date: [1928-30]
 Contents: Manuscript draft of uncompleted poem,
 8 lines.

"There is No Need

for Any
 Lamentation" A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
 Title: [THERE IS NO NEED FOR ANY LAMENTATION]
 First line: There is no need for any lamentation
 Collation: O. & E., p. [7]
 Date: [1923-24]
 Contents: Manuscript draft of uncompleted poem, 3
 stanzas of 4 lines and one additional line.

"There's Little

Kissing Done By
 Lethe River" A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
 Title: [THERE'S LITTLE KISSING DONE BY LETHE RIVER]
 First line: There's little kissing done by Lethe River
 Collation: O. & E., p. [31]
 Date: [1924-25]
 Contents: Manuscript draft of uncompleted, untitled
 poem, 2 stanzas of 4 lines each.

"There's Little

Kissing Done By
 Lethe River" A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
 Note: found on single sheet of paper;
 several emendations and both stanzas
 cancelled by a heavy double line.
 (Prose note alongside describes
 scene at Calvary).

"Thor the
Thunderer ..."

A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
[THOR THE THUNDERER ...]
Title: Thor the Thunderer was I
First line: S.N.B., p. [3]
Collation: [1924-25]
Date: Manuscript draft of untitled, uncompleted
Contents: poem, 2 stanzas of 6 and 11 lines
respectively; several emendations and
corrections in pencil.

"To One Who
Offered
Consolation"

T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
Title: To One Who Offered Consolation
First line: Don't sear my wounds with the vinegar of your
balm
Collation: 1 sheet of note-paper. P.C.P.
Date: 1926-27
Contents: Typescript of completed poem, 2 stanzas of
4 lines each.

"To-day She Has No
Joy of Mirth"

A.ms. 1 p.
Title: TO-DAY SHE HAS NO JOY OF MIRTH
First line: To-day she has no joy of mirth
Collation: P., p. [5]
Date: 1923
Contents: Manuscript draft of verse epitaph, 4 lines,
2 emendations in pencil. T.r. "22/5/23".

"To-day she has no
joy of mirth"

Found in P.V.M. Entry otherwise identical
to above.

"Turn we to left
or right"

A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in ink)
Title: [TURN WE TO LEFT OR RIGHT]
First line: Turn we to left or right
Collation: 1 sheet of letter-head paper
Date: [1922-23]
Contents: Manuscript draft of poem, 18 lines recto,
7 lines verso. Also verso: "Leighton
Laboratories".

"Two-fold"

A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
Title: Two-fold
First line: The patient Christ upon the golden cross
Collation: P., p. [5]
Date: 1923
Contents: Manuscript of completed epigram. Figure
"10" written at end of first and third
lines (i.e., 10 syllables) B.r. "22/5/23".

"Underneath Them
As They Lay"

A.ms. 1 p. (Mason's hand in pencil)
Title: [UNDERNEATH THEM AS THEY LAY]
First line: Underneath them as they lay
Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
Date: [1928-32]
Contents: Manuscript draft of untitled, uncompleted poem,
2 stanzas of 8 and 12 lines respectively recto,
1 stanza of 9 lines and further notes verso;
several emendations and corrections in pencil.

- "The Unpardonable Sin"
 Title: THE UNPARDONABLE SIN
 First line: As I lay there stiff with drink
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1940-44]
 Contents: Typescript of completed poem, 6 stanzas of varying lengths. B.r. P.W.D. [Pseudonym adopted from P.W.D. Main Stores, Penrose, where he worked for two years, and was subsequently used in the People's Voice and In Print.]
- Weather Report"
 Title: WEATHER REPORT
 First line: May the Seaward Kaikouras avert the cold air-stream
 Collation: 1 sheet of note-paper
 Date: [1962-63]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of completed poem, 2 stanzas of 4 lines each.
- "We Know That The Gods Think Otherwise"
 Title: [WE KNOW THAT THE GODS THINK OTHERWISE]
 First line: We know that the Gods think otherwise
 Collation: P., p. [11]
 Date: [1923-24]
 Contents: Manuscript draft of untitled, uncompleted poem, 1 stanza of 4 lines, 1 incomplete stanza of 3 lines.
- "We've Been Their Fool Long Enough You and I"
 Title: [WE'VE BEEN THEIR FOOL LONG ENOUGH YOU AND I]
 First line: We've been their fool long enough you and I
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of notepaper. P.C.P.
 Date: [1930-32]
 Contents: Manuscript of untitled poem, 4 stanzas of 4 lines each.
- "When My Book Is Banned"
 Title: WHEN MY BOOK IS BANNED
 First line: If just reading this would send strong men astray
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of notepaper. P.C.P.
 Date: [1928-30]
 Contents: Typescript of verse epigraph, 3 lines.
- "Where Are Now The Ways"
 Title: [WHERE ARE NOW THE WAYS]
 First line: Where are now the ways
 Collation: O. & E., p. [37]
 Date: [1930-32]
 Contents: Manuscript draft of untitled, uncompleted poem, 2 4-lined stanzas, 1 part stanza of 2 lines.

- "The Worms ..."
 Title: [THE WORMS ...]
 First line: The worms in the midnight gloom of that canal
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of lined paper. U.S.
 Date: [1924-25]
 Contents: Manuscript draft of untitled, uncompleted sonnet, 11 lines; many emendations and corrections. List of 6 possible rhymes.
- "You Are the forest ..."
 Title: [YOU ARE THE FOREST ...]
 First line: You are the forest taking all things to her breast:
 Collation: 1 sheet of green paper.
 Date: [1962-63]
 Contents: Carbon copy typescript of untitled poem, 2 stanzas of 7 and 6 lines.
- "You'll lie with
 Late Winter
 Lilies ..."
 Title: [YOU'LL LIE WITH LATE WINTER LILIES ...]
 First line: You'll lie with late winter lilies in your hand
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of lined paper. P.C.P.
 Date: [1924-25]
 Contents: Manuscript of untitled poem, 4 stanzas of 4 lines each.
- "Your Pardon,
 Gentlemen..."
 Title: [YOUR PARDON, GENTLEMEN: ...]
 First line: Your pardon, gentlemen: I own
 Collation: 4 *sheets* of coarse pad paper,
 Date: [1938-42]
 Contents: Manuscript draft of untitled, uncompleted poem, 4 stanzas of 4 lines each, 2 additional lines and many emendations and corrections in pencil.

5. OTHER LITERARY AND PERSONAL PAPERS

(1) A Selected Checklist of Mason's Letters

A relatively large collection of letters is found among the Mason Papers. Among the most significant are the following:

(i) Letters to Mason

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Curnow, Allen | 28 March, 1944. Discusses Mason's standing in New Zealand poetry and his place in <u>A Book of New Zealand Verse</u> . |
| Doyle, Charles | 26 June, 1963. Discusses his plans for a study of Mason's work. |
| Firth, Clifton | 18 July, 1962. A letter indicting that "old reprobate", Fairburn. 24 July, 1962. Discusses Fairburn and Mason's "Sonnet to MacArthur's Eyes". |
| Glover, Denis | 12 February, 1937. Raises the possibility of a new edition of Mason's poems. 20 January, 1941; 9 August, 1941; 1 October, 1941. Tells of progress on the text of <u>This Dark Will Lighten</u> . 2 April, 1956; 22 July, 1956; 23 July, 1956; 3 February, 1957. Urges Mason to publish his <u>Collected Poems</u> . 7 February, 1964 and 27 April, 1964. Asks Mason to lend him copies of letters received from Fairburn. |
| Monro, Harold | 27 December, 1924. Discusses his reaction to the poems in <u>The Beggar</u> (Cf. Appendix 1). 26 April, 1929. Acknowledges receiving a letter and poems from Mason. |

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Monro, Harold (continued... | 5 November, 1929. Hopes that Mason has not been "overwhelmed by an uncongenial life ..." and advises him that he has included two poems in his <u>Twentieth Century Poetry</u> . |
| de Montalk, Geoffrey | 11 February, 1925. A postcard discussing <u>The Beggar</u> . |
| N.Z.B.C. | 15 January, 1963. Inviting Mason to edit <u>Poetry Magazine</u> (a Y.C. Radio Programme) for 1963. |
| P.E.N. | 20 September, 1963. Advising him of his reception of the Jessie Mackay Award. |
| Rhodes, H.W. | 25 March, 1963. Congratulating Mason on his acceptance of the Burns Fellowship. |
| Winter [?] , N.A. | 15 July, 1924. Congratulating Mason on his publication of <u>The Beggar</u> . |

(ii) Letters from Mason

Of greater interest, perhaps, are the letters from Mason to his friends and associates. It was his general practice to keep copies of the letters he wrote. The following are among the most significant:

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| to: Atlantic Monthly Press | 25 November, 1932. Offering typescript of <u>No New Thing</u> for publication. |
| to: Brown, Goldie | 13 July, 1962. Concerning the interpretation of "Prelude" (from <u>End of Day</u> .) |
| to: Caselberg, John | 12 November, 1962. Discussing his [Mason's] year as Burns Fellow. |
| to: Doyle, Charles | 26 June, 1963. Stating his reservations about Doyle's study. |
| to: Fairburn, A.R.D. | 23 April, 1931. Concerning affairs at Auckland University College and the effects of the Depression on New Zealand. |

| | |
|--|--|
| to: Fairburn, A.R.D. (continued..... | 14 May, 1931. Advising Fairburn against returning to New Zealand. |
| to: Firth, Clifton | 15 August, 1962. Defending Fairburn. |
| to: Gardiner, Cecil | (a planter in Apia), 17 July, 1931. Concerning the Depression in New Zealand. |
| to: Glover, Denis | 5 November, 1937. Concerning his [Mason's] adherence to Marxism. |
| to: The Hogarth Press | 1 December, 1933. Offering the typescript of <u>No New Thing</u> for publication. |
| to: Knox, Ray | 29 April, 1971. Providing autobiographical information for his entry in <u>New Zealand's Heritage</u> . |
| to: Middleton, O.E. | 6 April, 1962. Concerning the concept of isolation in New Zealand literature. |
| to: His Mother | Various letters but especially dating from the year 1930. |
| to: The Registrar, University of Canterbury | 18 November, 1948. Applying for a tutorship in Adult Education in the North Canterbury region. |
| to: The Registrar, Victoria University of Wellington | 16 December, 1948. Applying for a Junior Lectureship in English. |
| to: The Registrar, University of Otago | 17 October, 1961. Applying for the Burns Fellowship (with an enclosure outlining his writing career and his future plans for writing). |
| to: The Registrar, University of Otago | 31 August, 1962. Describing his achievements in that year, outlining plans for further writing, and applying for an extension of the Fellowship. |
| to: Stewart, John | 10 June, 1933. Concerning <u>Phoenix</u> . |
| to: Slater, Stuart | 28 August, 1963. Concerning a possible interpretation of poetry. |
| to: Waten, Judah | 22 February, 1962. Describing his reaction on receiving the Burns Fellowship. |

(2) The Mason Papers in the Alexander Turnbull Library

(i) MS Papers 61 (G.E.L. Westbrook): 27 Mason to Westbrook.

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| 1 March, 1931 | Informing Westbrook that the book is almost finished. |
| 17 April, 1931 | Informing Westbrook that his [Westbrook's] pictures are probably all Hogarths; of the difficulty of disposing of them and of their need for restoration. |
| n.d. | Further information about Westbrook's portraits and about Mason's work on Westbrook's reminiscences. |
| 12 June, 1931 | Discussing Westbrook's bankruptcy and the sale of his pictures. Asks for an outline of Westbrook's life for the book. |
| 9 August, 1931. | Discussing conditions in New Zealand. About the Samoans and Mau songs. |
| 4 October, 1931 | Concerning New Zealand politics during the Depression. |
| 25 October, 1931 | Westbrook to Mason: Account of his life. |
| 16 February, 1932 | Westbrook to Mason: Comments on Mason's book. |
| 24 June, 1932 | Mason to Westbrook: Sending typescript of book. |
| 15 June, 1933 | Westbrook to Mason: Concerning Dana |
| 8 December, 1933 | Westbrook to Mason: Concerning Dana; Nelson and the Mau. |

Folders 82 and 82A comprise Westbrook's typescript of An Old Trader ... before Mason's editing and a copy with R.A.K. Mason's editing.

(ii) MS Papers 224 (A.E. Mulgan): Folder 15

12 February, 1948

Allowing Mulgan to use any of his poems for Mulgan's anthologies.

(3) The Mason Papers in the Hocken Library

(i) Phoenix Material

- (a) A copy of "Groundswell" by Eric Cook - the article which, while in galley form, was excluded from Phoenix, Vol. 2, No. 2, June, 1933.
- (b) A draft of notes by Mason on the above subject evidently intended for the fourth edition, but not used there.
- (c) Various material in typescript and manuscript form and the galley-proofs for the fifth issue which was, in fact, never published.
- (d) Miscellaneous newspaper clippings, articles, letters, a poem and an illustration - all intended for comment or publication in Phoenix.
- (e) Miscellaneous letters concerning Phoenix affairs.
- (f) A typescript by Mason of reminiscences about Phoenix, 6 p.

(ii) Material Connected with "Frontier Forsaken"

- (a) Miscellaneous items used as source material for Frontier Forsaken
- (b) A typescript by Mason - "Some Notes on Source Material for 'Frontier Forsaken' "., 7 p.

(iii) Material Connected with "Dreams Come True" - Mason's Uncompleted Novel.

- (a) A copy of the manuscript.
- (b) Miscellaneous notes for the novel.
- (c) A typescript which outlines the narrative and gives explanatory comment. 10 p.

(iv) Miscellaneous Lecture Notes

- (a) On the French Revolution.
- (b) "Optimism of the Victorians"
- (c) On Communism
- (d) On Soviet Literature.

All of these were evidently intended for a lecture series on behalf of the Auckland W.E.A.

- (v) Several miscellaneous letters.

PART FOUR

J A M E S K . B A X T E R

1926 - 1972

JAMES K. BAXTER

1. AN OUTLINE OF HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS¹

James Keir Baxter was born in Dunedin on the 29th of June, 1926. His father, Archibald Baxter was a self-educated Otago farmer of Scottish descent who had a great love of poetry, and his son has recorded that he " ... recited Burns and Shelley and Byron and Blake and Tom Hood and Henry Lawson when the mood took him."²

James Baxter's mother had gained a B.A. degree at Sydney University, and had taken the Tripos in Modern Languages at Newnham College, Cambridge. She was a daughter of Professor J. Macmillan Brown, teacher extraordinary of English and Classics at the University of Canterbury where, it was once remarked, he became " ... a legend for his energy, his prejudices, his utopian writings and works on Pacific ethnology, and his part in shaping the University of New Zealand."³

The young Baxter began to write verse at the age of seven and continued to do so during his early schooling at Brighton, near Dunedin, and at the Friends' School on St. John's Hill in Wanganui. During this time he seems to have enjoyed some kind of primitive nature mysticism.

In 1937 he travelled to Europe with his parents and boarded for a time at Sibford School, a Quaker establishment in the Cotswolds. The Baxter family returned to New Zealand on the eve of the Second World War. In 1940 he began his secondary schooling at King's High School.

1. I have previously outlined Baxter's life in my thesis Man Without A Mask (1968) and in The Poetry of James K. Baxter, Wellington, Oxford, 1970. This thesis is especially concerned with the unpublished writings of Baxter, now in my possession.

2. "Notes on the Education of a New Zealand Poet", The Man on the Horse, Dunedin, University of Otago Press, 1967, p. 122.

3. Biographical note on Baxter in the Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse (ed. Allen Curnow), London, Penguin Books, 1960, p.313.

Baxter's adolescence was not especially happy, and his unrelenting criticism of the Calvinist sub-structure of New Zealand society dates from this time when:

All the pressures were on me ... to accept the Calvinist ethos which underlies our determinedly secular culture like the bones of a dinosaur buried in a suburban garden plot - work is good, sex is evil; do what you're told, and you'll be all right.⁴

He has described the period of adolescence as "... the authentic and terrible grey rock desert."⁵

By the beginning of 1944 Baxter had enrolled at Otago University where his chief interests proved to be of a non-academic kind: "Aphrodite, Bacchus and the Holy Spirit were my tutors, but the goddess of good manners and examination passes withheld her smile from me."⁶ By the middle of the next year he had decided to break off his studies: "I thought", he wrote, "that I had to find out who I was or else take a large dose of strychnine, and that I needed more elbow room to get on with living and writing."⁷

Thus from 1945 to 1948 he worked at various labouring jobs in Dunedin and, in that last year, Christchurch, where he also attended occasional lectures at the university. He was employed as a farm worker, a porter in a TB sanatorium, a freezing worker, a foundryman, a postman, a copyholder for a newspaper and a hotel porter. It seems that he would work for a time, drink for a week, and then write poems until his money ran out and he was forced to take another job. His remarkable first book of poetry, Beyond the Palisade, had been published in 1944, and during the subsequent four years of erratic employment the poems in Blow, Wind of Fruitfulness were written.

4. "Notes on the Education of a New Zealand Poet", op.cit.

5. ibid.

6. "Essay on the Higher Learning", Spike, 1961, p.62.

7. ibid. (Cf. also Appendix 1, "A Bibliography of the Separately-Published works of James K. Baxter".)

He had also discovered the poetry of Dylan Thomas:

When I got a copy of that little book, Deaths and Entrances, I carried it in the inside pocket of my working coat - through the iron works, the freezing works, the pubs - drunk and sober - until those poems were part of the structure of my own mind.⁸

Thus began one of his many significant literary allegiances.

At the end of 1948 Baxter married and moved to Wellington where he eventually completed his B.A. part-time at the University and compiled his third poetry collection, The Fallen House, which was published in 1953.

After a period of school-teaching he became a sub-editor in the School Publications Branch of the Department of Education, but this experience seemed only to crystallise his objections to bureaucracy. At a later time he spoke of " ... the grim fiasco of work in a Government department ..." ⁹ which he believed, " ... paralyses the people who are caught up in it." He added that he was " ... quite well qualified to round out such a picture, having been submerged in that kind of work for seven years in Wellington."

In 1958 there occurred a significant change in his life - he joined Alcoholics Anonymous and was received into the Roman Catholic Church. At a later time he wrote:

... I'm afraid all I really know of [God] is what the Church teaches, which I accept gladly on authority. Otherwise there are many feelings, but nothing certain. The insights in the poems are bits of fragmentary knowledge picked up on a beach ... Of God I know so little that you could write it on a peachstone - He is love; He is Jesus Christ; and I trust Him ... I am some kind of zombie who has strayed into the Church by mistake, or rather because I had to, like a drunk to the Outpatients Ward.¹⁰

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8. "With Stubble and Overcoat", N.Z. Listener, 1364, 26 November, 1965, p. 25.
 9. Baxter's programme note to The Bureaucrat, "Festival at the Globe Theatre / 1968", Dunedin, January, 1968.
 10. Letter to the author, 11 March, 1961.

The later poems in his 1958 publication, In Fires of No Return, record his spiritual struggles at that time.

In 1963 Baxter resigned from the civil service and became a postman. A little earlier he had written:

... I am tired of lending my brain to Caesar and having it returned fagged and filthy ... now it seems [God] requires a better thing - that I should sell only my labour, not my brain, in the urban brothel, and be free to look on the faces of other men and praise Him when I so desire ... I hope this means that I will stand before Caesar with my mind unbought, till the day I die, and in chains as suits a Christian ...¹¹

During 1966 and 1967 he moved once again onto the fringes of academic life when he accepted the Robert Burns Fellowship at the University of Otago. When that expired he took part in catechetical work in Dunedin for a year. This was a period of great literary fruitfulness provoked by a late encounter with the setting of his childhood and the memory of his ancestors.

In 1968 he wrote of yet another momentous change in his life:

... I have news that will bring you joy - to some sorrow, but to you joy alone. The Lord has gripped my heart in his fist, and I am full of terror and joy.

- (a) I work down here this year as I have agreed.
- (b) I have told the Bishop here of my hope, and he refuses to prevent it.
- (c) I give away all money, all possessions, at the end of the year.
- (d) I go to Jerusalem on the Wanganui River, in working clothes, without money ...

So, John, I am to be the naked seed from which Our Lord, if He wills, will bring a tree. The tree is aroha. Aroha is Christ in His Humanity. Christ has a pakeha and a Maori face. The Maori face is distinguished by us. I must become a Maori in my heart - as I am already a little by love of my Maori wife - to help both Maori and pakeha.¹²

11. *ibid.*, 9 February, 1962.

12. An undated letter to the author, [1968].

In a dream he had heard the call "Go to Jerusalem!", the tiny settlement on the Wanganui River which will always be associated with his name. Faithful to that invitation he left Dunedin with only a change of clothes and a Bible in Maori.

The route he took "led through Auckland (Grafton and Parnell, the junkies' haven in Boyle Crescent memorably recalled by Baxter in ... a prose piece in Islands), with briefer forays to other decaying and condemned communal lodgings in Wellington."¹³ Early in 1970 he set out from Auckland for Jerusalem "to grow kumaras".¹⁴

He was driven by two further realisations: that he "was steadily dying in the comfort of [his] home, smoking cigars and watching television."¹⁵, and that there existed "a really gross and obvious need for some of the people who [were] getting pulled to pieces in the towns to have a sanctuary."¹⁶

He elaborated his reasons further in a newspaper interview:

I do not favour chemical solutions for spiritual and psychological problems ... But I do recognise that the smashed myths have somehow to be replaced or reconstructed.

That is why I have become a Christian guru, a barefooted and bearded eccentric, a bad smell in the noses of many good citizens.

I am concerned whether their children live or die, whether or not they themselves are concerned about it ...

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13. Bertram, James, "Poet of Extremes", N.Z. Listener, 1724, 20 November, 1972, p.12.
 14. Newspaper account of Baxter's death, Christchurch Star, 23 October, 1972, p.1.
 15. "Poet, Philosopher and Commune Patriarch", Auckland Sun, 23 October, 1972.
 16. "The Jerusalem Experience", N.Z. Listener, 1668, 18 October, 1971, p.19.

I will go on, then, as a practiser of voluntary poverty and a loud-mouthed critic of social injustices, more because the young ones need to know that some of us care about these things than because I have any hope of effective social change.

In the immediate view the effort might seem quite useless.

It would seem much wiser, as well as more congenial, to shift into a cottage on the sea coast, and fish for crays and write poems about God, and let dog eat dog.

But I am unable to do this. It might be for a number of reasons.

It might even be because I love the country I was born in.¹⁷

The record of Baxter's life at Jerusalem can be read in Jerusalem Sonnets (1970), Jerusalem Daybook (1971) and Autumn Testament (1972).

The news of his death in Auckland on Sunday, 22 October, 1972, was accompanied by an extraordinarily widespread reaction of grief. Three days later he was buried in the tribal ground of the Ngati Hau - the tribe into which he had been inducted in the previous May.

In a manuscript poem entitled "Song for Sakaymuni" (*sic*) he recorded his own epilogue to this last remarkable phase of his life:

There was a man who lived at Jerusalem,
He had an old coat, he wore his toenails long,

The newspapers made up stories about him
To entertain the housewives - Why couldn't he live

In the Kingdom of Anxiety like any other man
And go into his house like a rabbit to its burrow?

17. "A Scorpion Circled by Fire", Sunday Times, 16 January, 1972, p.7.

God was his problem; God and the Universe;
He had, let us say, a problem of identity -

Now if you go to the valley of Jerusalem,
You'll find that the silence is like any other silence,

You'll find that the river is like any other river,
You'll find that the rain is like any other rain,

But the old man has gone out of the picture,
Leaving an empty picture frame.

2. A DESCRIPTION OF SELECTED UNPUBLISHED POEMS

Baxter and I began to correspond about the time when he was beginning to emerge from that difficult period in the late 'fifties when it seemed that he might never write well again.

In an early letter he predicted a possible end of the drought. He wrote: "The silences and the famines are I think always the times that bear most fruit in the end."¹⁸

It was partly a matter of motivation. In another letter Baxter admitted:

At one time it seemed to me that I should regard, as Eliot is said to have done, every poem as a temptation. Yet why, after all? In the spaces between our writings and prayers and conversations we have plenty of time to enter into the silence of the Magdalen at the Cross; that endless prayer of the Church, rising in total silence from every place where her members suffer. So I will write and not count it robbery ...¹⁹

Baxter's struggle with visible and invisible demons is recorded in the third section of In Fires of No Return (1958), in such poems as "To God the Son". Among his manuscript verse, "Easter 1961" approximates these excursions along his "purgatorial pathway":²⁰

Lord, to go like a blind beast is hard
To that Jerusalem we have not seen,
Were it not for the root of pain that you have planted
In the soul's cloven rock. The scourge of sin
Is biting your children. We dream of the slaughter-yard.
Unknowable God, you who have charge of the dead
In the fields of fair sight, consider, remember us
In our confessing darkness. You have sown
The sparks of pain in Adam's flesh and bone
And faith itself is hard. Do not render
Consolation, if that pain is nearer
The heart of life than any joy could be.
Grant that I may hang on the right-hand tree
And hear at length the words you spoke to Dismas ...

18. Letter, 13 January, 1961. (Cf. also Appendix 2, "Some Problems of Catholic Writers".)

19. Letter, 27 April, 1961.

20. Stevens, Joan, "Mr. Baxter's Progress", N.Z. Listener, 1183 18 May, 1962, p.35.

The manuscript collection also includes some early examples of what Bertram has called "genre studies".²¹ In such poems as "A Pakeha Girl Considers Her Maori Lover", "That a Power Greater Than Ourselves Could Restore Us to Sanity" and "The Dying Nazi Guard", the most obvious influence is that of Robert Lowell. A number of the dramatic pieces included in Pig Island Letters reveal that Baxter was soon able to transcend the merely derivative. "The Dying Nazi Guard" is an immature example of this kind of writing:

Mother, your hands are red,
 Speckled like salami ... The little black hen died;
 We fed her gobbets of bread
 In the carved coop where you painted
Gottes gute gabe, under the sycamore
 Whose whirling seeds are planes shot
 Down in the Fuhrer's War ... The Fuhrer lied
 When he promised us the Rhinegold, hot,
 Burning our fingers. At Buchenwald
 I hoisted the young Jew
 Up by the thumbs till the swine sweated blue
 With a pine cone in his arse ... The door
 Won't shut against the unburied ones who stink
 All day. At Buchenwald
 The Christ-Child walks the barracks, blue and thin,
 With bread for someone else's sin,
 And I am Buchenwald. These foul sheets smother;
 They are hoisting me up, Mother!
 Your schnapps is Jewish blood; I cannot drink.

There are examples, too, among the manuscripts of Baxter's mariolatry. "Complaint to Our Lady in Winter" illustrates such devotional writing, as does "The Virgin":

As Our Lady of Mount Eden I would have emptied your jails,
 As Our Lady of Parihaka I would have united the Maoris,
 As Our Lady of Lyttelton I would have guarded your shipping,
 As Our Lady of Lincoln I would have looked after your flocks,
 As Our Lady of Taupo I would have healed your sick.

"I would have given you crosses heavy as the sea
 And consolations like sweet kumara.

"How tenderly I would have led you!
 But when you built your house you left me out of it."

21. "A Poet's Progress", N.Z. Listener, 1025, 17 April, 1959, p.12.

This manuscript collection reveals that at one time Baxter was contemplating a sequence of poems built around the character of "Concrete Grady". "Mr. Cogwarden and Concrete Grady", "Concrete Grady Under Shock Treatment" and the poem which follows, "Concrete Grady's Christmas Meditation", are typical of a number of other published and unpublished narrative and dramatic poems:

An old song of the music hall
I will sing, or none at all,
Though women lift their noses high
When I haul out to cool my throat
A bottle from my overcoat
And say a word to make their feathers fly.

On the hills behind Kaitangata
A cord of old man manuka,
I cut it in a day.
I got my cheque and bummed a ride to town
For a pan of eels and a woman and a shakedown
And sold my boots for a bottle of White Lady.

Mad McAra, John O'Hara,
Spieler Joe and my dry father,
In the marble orchard lie.
Their ghosts at daybreak in my room
Beckoning with a wicked thumb
Ask me for a bucket of White Lady.

When I was kneehigh to a gander
I learnt to fart against the thunder;
Big Mother Joseph broke her cane on me.
When the white Host rides in air
I bend my head and say a prayer
For that old harridan hot in Purgatory.

A burning orphan in the night
I took a wander by starlight
To where the Child in a loosebox lay -
"Concrete Grady is my name
And I'll be damned", I said to Him;
"Then I'll be damned Myself", said He to me.

A number of poems in Howrah Bridge and others in Pig Island Letters owe much to Lawrence Durrell. Of this allegiance Baxter has remarked: "Durrell loosens up the chains of association, helping me to avoid heavy aphorisms

about Time or God, and keep the eye on the invaluable sensory image ..."²² Baxter's reading of Durrell coincided with his exorcism of emotional excesses and the inflated rhetoric which critics had censured. Its positive contribution was a sinewy verse bonded in the natural scene.

Manuscript poems which exemplify the "carped, carved, little two-lined stanzas"²³ identified by Louis Johnson as part of Baxter's debt to Durrell include "July 1961" and "The Bureaucrats":

Like salamanders we don't realise
The element we live in - us

Bureaucrats I mean. A tight
Cramp like the impulse to masturbate

Squeezes me as I tilt back on a chair
Of bent tubes and sponge rubber

Between the loaded desk and the door shut
By a forgotten choice. It is not

New: this nausea, a flicker of
Cold fire. My wife's photograph

With canoes in her eyes, and a steel crucifix
Pinned on the wall, shatter the reflex

That yielded for an instant to the invisible flame
Of nothingness. Caesar is not. I am.²⁴

Typical of the affirmative nature of Baxter's love poems for his wife is "The Person of My Dear" - a poem which also illustrates his ability to use a difficult stanzaic form:

Being so near, so near,
I need not walk the street to find
The person of my dear;

In quietness rises the fear
Of gaps, crevasses in the mind,
Being so near, so near,

22. Recent Poetry in New Zealand (ed. Charles Doyle), Auckland Collins, 1965, p. [29].

23. Editorial to N.Z. Poetry Yearbook, Vol. 11, Christchurch Pegasus Press, 1964, p.12.

24. "The Bureaucrats".

That could engulf us both. I hear
 The snow-bridge crack, I see ice-devils bind
 The person of my dear

And cannot help. This time of year
 Is difficult, the darkness makes us blind,
 Being so near, so near,

And married folk need crampons, that is clear,
 Where once the rope of a single kiss could wind
 The person of my dear

To light and gladness. Gently, gently steer
 Your course, my soul, where glaciers grind
 Being so near, so near

To the rock face that stands up sheer
 Above our lives. Its granite makes unkind
 The person of my dear

Because her heart is young. Weak love here
 Gets strength, gets muscle, leaves all drugs behind,
 Being so near, so near
 The person of my dear.

One feature of Baxter's poetic development was his movement away from the gravely rhetorical to the easy vernacular. This verbal and rhythmical freedom is illustrated by a manuscript poem of 1961:

Balancing on the rickety scaffolding
 Under the spouting, I fiddle with a brush.
 "Somebody has to do this kind of thing" -
 Will Saint Gabriel grab me if I dive
 Thirty feet
 Down, like a bull seal, to the concrete?
 My faith's too weak. My wife
 Suddenly respectful to the mainstay of her life
 Sings in the kitchen like a thrush,
 "Ko tenei te po ..."
 My rigours make her thrive.
 My daughter, in shorts and jandals,
 Whinges down below
 About some bad word someone said, or that
 Fat-bellied Freudian mouse
 Who camps under my bed.
 We'll have to get another tomcat.
 She thinks I'm an acrobat
 In a travelling show. My son
 Brings me a spider in a bottle. Red
 As old burnt clay its hypodermic head -
 "Look, Daddy, look!" The house
 Of Atreus glitters in the midday sun.²⁵

In many of the poems written between 1966 and 1969 Baxter re-investigated the setting of his childhood with strength and melancholy. It had been thought that this was an especially late change, but Baxter's manuscripts reveal that as early as 1962, while still resident in Wellington, he was achieving this tone. "The Flood" and "Dunedin 1962" give evidence of this:

If there is any culture here
It comes from the black south wind
Howling above the factories
A handsbreadth from Antarctica.

So lucky when the flagons were full,
Dear ghosts, let me abandon
What cannot be held against
Hangmen and educators, the city of youth.

The moon like a bullock's skull
Hanging over the scrub fence of Mount Cargill
Tells me only - "Varrus is dead" - and "Better
Not to have been born than to be Pyrrha's lover."²⁶

Baxter remarked of this poem "A stone clumping at the bottom of a deep dry well. I like it better than some of the heartier ones."²⁷

Yet, in fact, from that confrontation with his past which occurred when he took up the Burns Fellowship there did arise a prolific crop of verse. Some of this, like "The Chariot", is prophetic in its attitudes:

Though the god Technology has lifted
Me above myself in the dead metal belly

Of the thunderbird, over the winding silted
River bends and grey feathered willows,

To a place where my father's house is far too small
To live in, and I watch the waves bending

Against the buttress of Black Head
Alongside Green Island's tidy cone,

26. "Dunedin 1962"

27. Letter, 14 March, 1962.

The clouds my sisters do not disapprove
(Floating and blessing the brown husk of the land)

But grant me the right to an unreal vantage
From which birds and fishing boats

Are equal in submission. Because man is
Able to die, he earns one glimmer of sight,

Avoiding solipsism, to praise and weep
Over whatever engenders the sad human glory.

Much of this poetry has elegiac overtones but it is not
verse of lamentation. The experience of loss is valuable
for its own sake:

To postulate a slackness
In the fibre of earth; as if she
Had offered harsh heaven too many
Children, or else too various;
Emancipated, had thrown off
Our heavy fiction of maternity,
From us drew back a blanket love -

Is also to acknowledge in
Self what would lie down and snore
Outwitting judgement - but heard clatter,
Saw rise, merciful between
Breakers and heaps of bladder-weed
That stank at Long Beach, one tall sail, rudder
And wheel of a sand-yacht where children ride,

And one cried, "Goodbye, jandal-face!"
To another mopishly waiting
And properly to us desiring
Sleep at best. Thus my dull ease
Was broken, and venereal thought
Constructed out of air or nothing
What hangs between me and the light,

A girl like a green hard stringy lupin pod
To touch, torment, and leave
The mind alone - tangibly might grieve
Me later with what Dylan Thomas said,
That pity is the fifth element;
Either way, what most could save
An afternoon, telling towards a new event.²⁸

28. "Apparition of the Goddess Venus to a Sleepy Man".

It was also his disillusionment with sexual love which brought about this mood, but he attributed his sufferings to another cause. In the second part of "four words about love" he remarked, "... it is life not the lover / that strips us to the bone."

Such a loss is seen as part of the necessary growth of the spirit, and many of Baxter's late poems record, without regret, the painful birth of a new creature:

If this were indeed the final night
High up on the hill, above the gold claims,
Where wet needles fall on the shoulders,
Where voices out of the ground compel
Pity and recognition - if this night were final,
A drawing down of blinds

Over the human face and the instruments of torture,
I could understand it.

But not yet; one must still go
Another journey to another place
Where without kisses, without the clasping of fingers,
The snake-haired women will appear
Naked, clothed in our own deformity,

And take us singly through the gate in the rock
To the paddock of the slavegirl Blandina,
To where the soul is broken or else becomes²⁹
A bird, born out of blood, another creature.

"Epilogue for Ian" is a reflection upon a death of another kind:

The subject is not to my liking,
How this one whispered - "Bugger God" - and lay
Down dead in time to the famous tribal lament,

Or that one, having discovered the Vacuum, shrank
Rapidly to the shape of a little stone doll,
Labels that we invent and re-invent

For the same bottle. I can tell you, cousin,
Often I see my friends the suicides
Stabbing like needles through the cloth of life

29. "The Instruments".

To find the space behind it, or exploding
 Like anxious migratory birds
 That leave the pierhead empty and go north,

Counting them lucky but uncivil since
 They did not want to share the fug with us in
 This other death. But lately having heard

The great shout of judgement from your coffin
 Standing on trestles in the asbestos chapel,
 Preferring a bullet to a mother's kiss,

I admit I was wrong. Therefore, without argument,
 While cars and relatives groan on gravel roads,
 Sleep the black-bannered, the rock-undermining,

Sleep the contagious original sleep,
 Now you have found the perfect girlfriend, now
 The dark waters their reflections keep.

It was a highly accomplished performance, revealing that Baxter was still capable of writing well within a more formal literary tradition. He was shortly to abandon this, preferring the looser rhythmical units which he used in Jerusalem Sonnets and Jerusalem Daybook.

My manuscripts hold an historic poem, written on the eve of Baxter's departure from Dunedin in December, 1968. "Valediction" illustrates his argument with New Zealand society:

The death-blue sluggish river in the South
 Like veins on a dead man's arm ... O you hills
 Where I was born, the people at times were able
 To light fires, to keep lamps burning
 For their children to look at.

There is more than one

Schoolhouse looking at itself in a lagoon
 Where paradise ducks come down; but I must
 Describe also a sadness like flint
 Imbedded in the eyes of brown-haired children.

It doesn't matter. The country is dragging
 Chains of words, chains of money,
 Decorated with a necklace of petrol bowlers
 And waiting to be blessed by a good
 Psychiatrist. My dreams do not go South.
 Parents, grandparents, the fire you lighted
 Under my arse will keep me moving
 For another day at least. I will go north
 Tomorrow like a slanting rainstorm.

Almost six years earlier, Baxter had described Jack Kerouac's On the Road as a " ... masterpiece of flight - flight from marriage, from settled occupation, and from what other people think of us."³⁰ He admitted his own prejudice in Kerouac's favour.

Beside his argument with New Zealand society, Baxter was also engaged in a debate with the Church of his adoption. Much of this caught up in his poem, "Letter to John Weir":

Dear John - They'd have us locked away
 If they knew how from day to day
 Our minds work; and, true enough,
 Demons are made of mental stuff;
 They mask the naked malady
 The soul has in its nullity,
 As Buddha taught. But he has gone
 To sit upon the diamond throne
 And you and I lost in the dark
 At times may hear Hell's watchdogs bark
 And see their fangs, and throw a clod,
 And turn again to pray to God,
 Our King and Shield; though, as for Him
 Who rides upon the cherubim,
 Man, He could thump the deck at times
 Rebuking Israel for her crimes! -
 "Daughter, harlot, you who stray
 Blue-jeaned and pot-stoned through the day,
 You saw them painted on the walls,
 Chaldaean captains with big balls,
 And thought - 'I'll write a note to them' -
 Now blood will be your diadem
 And you'll repent your vanities
 Scrubbing floors upon your knees!"
 Thus any Kiwi father will
 Do his block and spout his fill
 But afterwards bring toast and jam,
 Peace offerings for his pet lamb,
 Or so I take it. Thus I find
 A precedent for my coarse mind
 That aggravates our bourgeoisie
 To call on God to throttle me
 Before their children catch the word
 One can be happy with a bird.
 But Frank McKay is much to blame;
 He has defiled the Holy Name

30. "Smoke Signals", N.Z. Listener, 1232, 3 May, 1963, p.19.

And dragged me to the edge of sin
 By sending me the Scriptures in
 The bright-eyed Ronald Knox translation;
 I comb the Prophets, chew Galatians
 Along with garlic for my dinner
 To prove God likes a lively sinner
 Better than some sad muttonhead
 Who hates his wife who farts in bed
 And makes his money out of Gas
 And passes round the plate at Mass.

Why do I hammer Poor Blind Nell,
 Our Pilgrim Church, our Israel,
 Our Mother Mild? Well, John, it is
 And old grass-widower's emphasis;
 My wife, because intelligent,
 Mainly adorned the Sacraments;
 And Our sweet Lord must feel annoyed
 Married to a mongoloid;
 I sympathise with Him.

Enough,

Dear John! The garden still looks rough
 And I must go there with a spade
 Before my first intentions fade
 And bend my back and stretch my arse
 Sifting out the bits of couch grass
 That like my sins will sprout again
 Whether I work or not. Amen.

Baxter has always handled the verse-letter form exceptionally well - possibly because the imagined presence of a specific audience caused him to write more precisely than he was otherwise accustomed to.

At the end of his life Baxter continued to write a considerable amount of verse, but no longer regarded it as of primary importance. This untitled poem is typical of much of his late writing:

Man, He has given me the cross of a child,
 Simply to knock off smoking

And dig a few square yards of ground!
 But you know, John, as well as I do,

The cross we carry is ourselves,
 The dog that tugs at its collar, the fence-breaker!

"He alone can count the stars
 And give each one of them its name" -

And if I say - "alas, that I was born,
"Alas for the trees and the river where I played as
a boy,

"Alas for the warm pubs, alas for the streets of
Grafton,
"Alas for the faces I cannot see again!" -

He, the counter of stars, accepts the lamentation
For what it is worth, the soon-dried tears of a child.

Many of the poems written by Baxter during his last years are quiet reflections on the inevitability of death. Without regret, without pain, they interpret the movement towards extinction as a growth into another, more vital dimension. "The Track" is such a poem:

The gates of the river widen. To be free
Of all time's rubbish, now the heart has gone
Beyond desire for any other body

Or care about one's own: this knowledge
Tugs like a magnet. The track is cut
In dripping rock, or else it crosses

Bogs and small lagoons on split
Timber wired with netting. We came
To the Boat House with sore shoulders and sore feet,

And where the horses have to swim
An Irishman ferried us over
With a single oar. On two planks hanging from

Twisted wires we crossed another river
Boiling from the falls, an unused
Muscle beginning to move at the soul's centre,

Counting our steps, already dazed
With tiredness. There were great clefts below
Every second boulder that could have housed

A traveller for the night, with no
Money to pay, where spider and brown weka
Are easy landlords. We had to go

Through corridors of fern and fuchsia
Earlier to reach that quiet lake
A mile or two before Pompolona

Where we rested and skated stones on the dark
Water. The rain-wet rotted wood
Blanketted in moss, shelters the quick

Fantail and heavy pigeon, but the black seed
 Of Adam slowly, slowly can
 Cast off its need to be. The khaki-coloured flood

Rising will tear the branches down
 That overhang it. Only the dead
 Walk easily through doors of solid stone.

Baxter's verse output was so prodigious that it is not surprising to find so many good poems remaining only in manuscript.

Many of these poems date from his last years when he had finally transcended his earlier influences and achieved an authoritative and personal voice. The strength of these poems still rests in their very egocentricity, but in the course of the search for his true self Baxter has learned to by-pass rhetoric. In his quest for metaphysical truth he has also discovered a poetic honesty. "Song for Sakaymuni" [sic] is a moving expression of this growth:

Loose as the washed pants and blouses that flap
 On the thin wire they've tied round the corner post
 of the verandah,

My words are no longer the words of Apollo
 But the river in its high gorges, life and death
 together,

Or the river in its shallows, mud and broken timber -
 The body is a wound, Sakaymuni said,

Covered with damp skin, oozing out foul juice
 From seven orifices, the wound we must bandage each day

In order to act and live in the light of the Dharma,
 And my wound is half my trouble - the other half

Is the folly of believing I am I
 In spite of contradiction - How hard to stop imitating

That waterlogged bee I saw on a clover head this morning,
 Clinging to its red petals while the winter rain crashed
 down!

2

A thread can hold the bird back from rising
Just as well as a domed wire cage;

My loves, I grant, are all self-love,
Except for the love I cannot call my own,

The wind that moves in the branches of the tree
Without premeditation - Can the stomach never vomit up

Those broken bits of mushroom, the poisoned food of Yama? -
"I am, I am, I am,

"A poet, a Catholic, a dry alcoholic,
A man of forty-four" - you, Jesus, you, Sakaymuni,

Help me out of the pit! No ladder is necessary;
Ladders are part of the pit - my brothers, when the
minute comes,

You will not see me; I will have gone out through the
crack in the rock
Like an old lizard - No more, no more, no more Becoming!

3

There was a man who lived at Jerusalem,
He had an old coat, he wore his toenails long,

The newspapers made up stories about him
To entertain the housewives - why couldn't he live

In the Kingdom of Anxiety like any other man
And go into his house like a rabbit to its burrow?

God was his problem; God and the universe;
He had, let us say, a problem of identity -

Now, if you go to the valley of Jerusalem,
You'll find that the silence is like any other silence,

You'll find that the river is like any other river,
You'll find that the rain is like any other rain,

But the old man has gone out of the picture,
Leaving an empty picture frame.

In the last ten years of his life Baxter acquired his own voice - a voice of absolute poetic authority - and from his confrontation with death emerged a number of bare, memorable poems, " ... like water out of the rock."³¹

31. "An Interview with Baxter", Appendix (3).

3. OTHER LITERARY MANUSCRIPTS

(1) Some Published Poems

A number of poems which Baxter sent me during his lifetime were subsequently published. As it was his practice to forward copies of those which he had just completed, it is possible to estimate the date of their composition. The dates given are those of the accompanying letters:

- "Anzac Day" : "Here is a poem I wrote yesterday. Do not be misled by its apparent harshness - it is basicly[sic] a very joyful poem. And the terrible sun which also nourishes everything that grows is an image of our good and terrible God. But we can know Him only by resting without knowledge in the grave He has made for us ..."
26 April, 1963.
- "The Ballad of Grady's Dream" : 16 February, 1965.
- "Concrete Grady at the Saturday Novena" : 2 November, 1961.
- "Cotton Trousers" : "... one can better one's way from ennui and vacancy into the state of natural contemplation that gives birth to a poem. Perhaps, as with prayer, the Holy Spirit waits for us to put out all our strength uselessly before He lifts us up. Here is one I battered out yesterday. You will get the natural analogies to the Pieta ...", 27 April, 1961.
- "The Dead Climber" : [1967]
- "Equality" : 18 August, 1961.
- "A Goan Villager Speaks in Heaven" : "Another piece sweated down from a foolish mock-ballad." 14 March, 1962.
- "Henley Pub" : "... a lengthy poem I have finally completed after ... many drafts - a modern statement of the Samson and Delilah theme ... I weigh the figure of Our Blessed Lady and that other darker figure of woman seen as Temptress against each other in this poem ... some such duality lies deep in the hearts of Catholic men ... we project our ideal love upon the Blessed Virgin and our sensual love upon the Temptress." 9 August, 1965.

- "Instruction" : 25 October, 1967.
- "The Labyrinth" : [1969]
- "Mary at Ephesus" : 1 March, 1967.
- "On a University Critic" : 18 August, 1961.
- "On a Well-Known Anthologist" : 18 August, 1961. (Note: This poem was published as "On a New Zealand Anthologist" in Poetry Yearbook, Vol. 10, 1962, p.26)
- "Poem for John Weir" : [June, 1971] . (Note: This poem was published under the title "Letter" in Edge 1 No. 1, August, 1971, p. 63.)
- "Reputation" : 18 August 1961.
- "The Rocks": "I enclose a poem I might not have written if I had not been communicating with you at the back of my mind. Allegorically it describes - or expresses - the wish of a soul to return to earth from Purgatory - essentially it is of course an expression of certain states of my own soul." 17 November, 1969 .
- "The Sea Hag" : [1967] .
- "Stat crux dum volvitur orbis ... " : I think it works; for I do talk most inwardly to Our Lady - one needs that inward dialogue where play, humour, random creativity, can have a part ..."
29 October, 1963.
- [The Survivors] : 11 March, 1961.
- "Then" : "It is about a drinking-bout I had a good while ago with a fellow-alcoholic ... at a pub at Puhoi, out of Auckland; but it refers to all those pub friendships with their innocently homosexual tinge, based on what seems a bottomless shared sadness. And why not? When nature in us, the old Adam, is dying, he naturally laments that he is dying..."
9 June, 1963.

"To M - in Clink" :

"I found among my alcoholic friends one who had suffered nearly all the atrocities which the world inflicts on its children, and gained from it a pure and simple spirit. I think I may say without presumption that God had left his thumbprint on her soul ... This is a little poem I wrote to her when she was in jail. She had been reading Ezra Pound there!..... The phrase 'the dirty cops' may appear unjust; but I had in mind a detective who had promised her release if she would commit fornication with him - a story which of course no one would ever believe, but I know them both well, and know it to be more than likely. She was up on the usual charges which amount to having no money and no work - that is, of being one of the poor."
13 January, 1961.

In addition to the poems listed above I have typescript copies of "The Cherry Tree"³² and "A Takapuna Businessman Considers His Son's Death in Korea", both of which have minor differences from the published versions. Another poem in my possession, "Mo La'u Uo",³³ was subsequently revised by Baxter and appeared twelve years after its composition as the tenth poem of the sequence "Words to Lay a Strong Ghost" in Runes. Finally, the typescript copy of "At Rakiura" in my collection is a considerably longer version of the published poem. It can now be regarded, in fact, as the penultimate draft.

32 This is a revised version of an earlier poem, "The Tree", "... in seven-syllabled lines with half-rhymed stanzas - and some of the resonance is lost, but some illegitimate oratory as well. I must be wholly honest in my verse" 21 March, 1965.

33. Baxter included a prose note with the poem: "Mo la'u Uo means 'for my friend', a Samoan writer ... Albert Wendt...." [1961] .

On the 12th of May, 1971, Baxter sent me manuscript copies of most of the poems later published in Jerusalem Daybook. Three of these, titled in manuscript form, were not given titles when they were published. These are "Empty Bellies" (J.D. 20-21), "The Ikons" (J.D. 23-24) and "Night Clouds" (J.D. 46).

The manuscript poem "Words to a Troubled Priest" is a draft of an untitled poem which appeared in Autumn Testament, p. 29-30.

(2) A Short Story - Baxter's Own Evaluation

In a letter of the 22nd of June, 1961, Baxter commented on a short story which he had enclosed. His remarks show that even though he did turn his hand to devotional prose on occasions, he was yet aware of the inadequacy of such writing:

I enclose a bit of prose I have written for ZEALANDIA. Sincere enough; but you will see what I mean by moralism - it is a sketch based on a meditation on the Holy Souls, and the trouble is not what I have put in, but what I have left out. No doubt it is good for me to write for a specific audience (in this case, the already-converted) for that is how one gets one's training in journalism; but on the other hand, there is a lie, or at least a radical incompleteness somewhere in it, and in all such efforts. The "he" of the story is the kind of Catholic (for instance) who has never discovered that he is evil; and the I who writes this letter came to Holy Mother Church because he knew that he was evil. You see, John, I am the "Barry" and the "he", and I suspect that one is not any better than the other in the sight of God; and if the story were to have a true point, that is the point I should have made; but I did not make it, because then it would take three months to write instead of three hours, and not be a ZEALANDIA story.

In point of fact, "The Secret" was not accepted by Zealandia for publication.

(3) Baxter's Notebook

On the 24th of February, 1967 Baxter sent me "... one of the rare notebooks that I have used, with notes taken on the Milford track, and some of the notes for the AT RAKIURA poem."

The notebook seems to cover a period of about a fortnight and it is clear that this was a very fruitful stage in Baxter's writing.

It holds notes and drafts for "At Glade House", "Towards Te Anau", section 3 of "At Glade House", "At Pompolona Huts", "The Monument", "The Falls", and two untitled drafts - "...an Irishman"³⁴ and "It was I who saw him fall".

After these preliminary workings the poems begin to take shape as a sequence entitled "The Track". The notebook then contains the following numbered drafts:

1. "Towards Te Anau"
11. "At Glade House"
 - i. "You write, uh? It's a great thing to be able"
 - ii. "Down grooved cairns weave the storm-white"
 - iii. "The gates of the river widen. To be free"
111. "At Pompolona Hut"
 - i. "Through corridors of fern and fuchsia"
 - ii. "One champion snorer is driving a team"
- IV. "At the Pass"
- V. "At Quintin Hut"
 - i. "The Falls"
 - ii. "'It was I who saw him fall'"
 - iii. "My son sleeps"
- VI. "Towards the -"
 - i. "The truck is out -"
 - ii. "At the big hotel an English tourist"

There follow drafts of various titled and untitled poems including:

"Seals", "The Deerstalkers", "Keep Fit Up Country", "Lake Quill" (4 drafts), "It would not do to turn out" (2 drafts), "Brunner", "Chair Lift", "At Queenstown", "Fox Glacier Hotel" (2 drafts), "Franz Josef", "At the Grave of a War Hero" (a fragment), "Inscription", "Plane Trip South", "West Coast", "Too often visited again, lying", "On a dry spring afternoon", "At Kuri Bush" (3 drafts), "Some day soon my father must wrestle with", "You could go early to bed", "You want me to write a love poem", "It is too late to take the river track", "To Speak Truly", "The Hut", "The Azalea Garden".

A number of these poems were published in the Listener and others were included in Runes.

The notebook entries close with 2 drafts of Section 6 of Baxter's prose article "Notes on the Education of a New Zealand Poet"³⁵, and 4 pages of notes for "At Half-Moon Bay".³⁶

35. The Man on the Horse, p.152-155.

36. Published under the title "At Rakiura", Runes, London, Oxford, 1973, p.32-33.

(4) Comparative Drafts of Baxter's Poems

In February 1967, Baxter sent me a number of drafts of poems written during the previous year. It was not his usual practice to keep such drafts, but in a preliminary letter he explained how these had survived: "...I have shoved all my drafts into a drawer of my desk over the past year, intending to present them to the Hocken Library - but I'd much prefer you to hang on to the ones I send you."³⁷ He also sent typed versions because, as he acknowledged, his hand-writing is sometimes almost indecipherable.

The first drafts I received included "...the more than 20-year-old original manuscripts of TUNNEL BEACH and HAAST PASS".³⁸

At the same time he conveyed the information that "...there was some (earlier) fragment of a poem, in which I identified myself with Lazarus in which one or two of the fire images of TUNNEL BEACH were present - I didn't hang on to it; and by the way, though HAAST PASS was written off straight, I'd got the mood of a poem about Dunkirk in my mind, from Alex Comfort I think - I changed flowing to falling, but wisely changed it back again."

More recent drafts included those of "The Beach House" "...as.....set out in my ms. book, where usually I put down the final draft and make few changes, if any".³⁹ "The Beach House", in fact, went through five drafts before taking, some months later, its final form.

Further drafts received at that time included those of "At Aramoana" (5 drafts in all) of which he noted, "... it's interesting the way the whole poem comes together as soon as I start on the 7-syllabled half-rhymed stanzas."⁴⁰

37 Letter, 16 February, 1967.

38 Letter, 17 February, 1967.

39 *ibid.* (cf. also Appendix 4, "Notes on Baxter's Method of Composition".)

40 *ibid.*

He also included the drafts of "At Rakiura". After six drafts and a great deal of effort it seemed as if a satisfactory version had been formulated. At that point he began to revise the poem, reducing it from fifty-four to twenty-six lines. He also provided an important note in which he suggested his reason for continuing to work on the poem:

I think the interesting point about AT RAKIURA is that I decided to reject the landscape images I'd jotted down on the back of the envelope, even though they seemed the logical end of a poem - because they are the tomb of nature, the Sphinx that looks at us from every tree and lake and hill - and I wanted to have something rough as sacks, and human - which I hope I have in the final draft.⁴¹

Other drafts received at that time included "At Wanaka" (2 drafts), "Blood Test" (1 draft), "The Communist Speaks" (1 draft), "Drunk" (1 draft) and "Midwinter Moon" (4 drafts).

On 24 February 1967 Baxter sent me the 11 drafts of "The Martian", a poem which I have already discussed in my thesis Man Without a Mask, and on the following day some notes on its composition. These included an interesting but futile passage on the rhythmical and sound effects of the poem:

.....I'll give you my notion of the metrical and rhyming scheme of "The Martian" - notation thus -

- heavy beat
+ light heavy beat
* light beat
/ division between metrical feet

-/-*/-*/-*/-*/-*

-*/
No! It's too bloody hard to work; though I think the

three-beat (or rather, three degrees of emphasis) pattern of analysis would probably be the most exact - some of the Yankee critics use a form of notation with four degrees of emphasis. So I'll keep it to two degrees of emphasis, as is traditional. This time -

- heavy beat
+ light beat
+-+/-+-/+--++/-+-+
-+/-++/-++/-+/-
--/+--/+--/+--/+--
+-/+--
+--/+--

Shit! It can be worked out John, after the event - but the best description is simply this - a poem with four strong beats to the line, sometimes increasing to five, once or twice decreasing to three, at the very end to two - predominantly dactylic in pattern, with free trochaic and spondaic substitution. The only end-words that don't fit into an unemphasized pattern of half-rhymes (or full rhymes) are police, radium and able - but police is assonantally linked to Reality, thus giving an internal assonance, especially since both logic and punctuation call for a pause after Reality, and the N.Z. habit is to pronounce such an ending not as "i" but as "ee"; and radium and able are also assonantal rhyme

Yes; that will do without breaking the mind with science. The poem has to sound right to me, John; but the process is barely conscious; and I didn't know till this minute why radium and able seemed right to me, even though they weren't consciously geared to the half-rhyme pattern, as for example crown and groin are, or consider and jaw; but now⁴² I see it was because they were exact assonances

From this passage it might be assumed that Baxter had only an instinctive control of rhythm and rhyme - whose mysteries he was unable to explain, even to himself. Yet his published poems provide evidence to the contrary, since he often attempted, with considerable success, the most difficult rhythmical patterns and stanzaic forms.

Baxter's drafts and notes were sent to me as an act of friendship and not without misgivings. He wrote:

Every now and then a sense of shame strikes me like a vulture at the notion of you having clear access to the meanderings of my balmy mind, as it works before a poem is complete; and if - as I intend to - I send you some Xerox copies of my ms. books to mull through, in a month or two when the Varsity library here has them done, you'll find scatterings of the casual or the careful obscene in them - it did cheer me up, though, to find precisely the same in an early ms. book of W.H. Auden, whose work I deeply admire.⁴³

42 Letter, 25 February, 1967

43 *ibid.*

(5) "The Drunk's Farewell" ⁴⁴

At the end of his first year as Burns Fellow at the University of Otago James K. Baxter considered publishing a collection of light verse. He offered it to the Pegasus Press: The typescript was sub-titled "verses light and heavy". In his letter Baxter gave his opinion of their quality:

.... as you can see, they are not really in Rex Fairburn's corner of the garden - I don't have his kind of wit. But I have carefully excluded the pornographic from it; and what remains is, I think, a selection that might entertain and sell well it is the kind of thing that Bob ⁴⁵ Lowry wanted to turn out for me some time

The poems ⁴⁶ included were:

- (1) "To Any Young Man Who Hears My Verses
Read in a Lecture Room"
- (2) "The Man I Might Have Been"
- (3) "Ballad of Modern Marriage and the Housing
Problem"
- (4) "Ballad of John Macfarlane and the Water Woman"
- (5) "Reflections at Khandallah Baths"
- (6) "The Sad Tale of Matilda Glubb"
- (7) "Ballad of the Holy Ghost"
- (8) "An Undelivered Address to a Catholic
Reading Group"
- (9) "The Particular Judgement of Concrete Grady"⁴⁷
- (10) "The Drunk's Farewell"

The opening poem will give some idea of the tone of the proposed collection:

44 The original typescript of this collection and Baxter's letter, as well as a copy of Albion Wright's reply, are in my possession.

45 Letter to Albion Wright, 21 December, 1966.

46 Three of these poems were, or have since been, published - "The Man I Might Have Been", "The Sad Tale of Matilda Glubb" and "An Undelivered Address to a Catholic Reading Group".

47 This is an alternative title for the poem described in the Checklist of Baxter's Unpublished Verse as "Mr Cogwarden and Concrete Grady".

When some cheese-headed ladder-climber reads
 A poem of mine from the rostrum,
 Don't listen. That girl in her jersey and beads,
 Second row from the front, has the original nostrum

I blundered through nine hundred parties and ninety-
 eight pubs
 → In search of. The words are a totem
 Erected long after for scholars and yobs
 Who'd make (if they could) a bicycle-seat of my scrotum.

Baxter didn't ever have the lightness of touch that makes
 for good light verse. Albion Wright's judgement on the collection
 was a fair one: "I would like to do a volume of light verse in
 the style of 'The Rakehellly Man', but before I do so I think you
 will have to think up a few more lighthearted and entertaining
 verses. At the moment, your 'heavy' outweighs your light."⁴⁸

48 Letter, 5 April, 1967.

4. APPENDICES

(1) A Bibliography of the Separately-Published Works of James K. Baxter.

- "Beyond the Palisade; poems" Christchurch, Caxton Press, 1944,
40 p.
- "Blow, Wind of Fruitfulness" Christchurch, Caxton Press, 1948,
51 p. (Caxton Poets, No.2).
Poems.
- "Hart Crane; a poem" Sumner. Printed at the
Catspaw Press, 1948. 1 p.
- "Charm for Hilary" Christchurch, Catspaw Press, 1949,
1 p. Poem.
- "Recent Trends in New
Zealand Poetry" Christchurch, The Caxton Press,
1951. 20 p. Text of a talk
given at Canterbury University
College during the New Zealand
Writers' Conference, 8-11 May, 1951.
- "Poems Unpleasant" [by] James K. Baxter, Louis
Johnson [and] Anton Vogt.
Christchurch, Pegasus Press, 1952.
61 p.
- "Rapunzel : a Fantasia for
Six Voices" Wellington, n.p., [1952?] 2 p.
- "The Fallen House; poems." Christchurch, The Caxton Press,
1953. 48 p.
- "Lament for Barney Flanagan,
Licensee of the Hesperus
Hotel" [no imprint. Wellington, 1954]
2 p. Poem.
- "The Fire and the Anvil;
notes on Modern Poetry" Wellington, New Zealand University
Press, 1955. 77 p. "The
substance of the Macmillan Brown
lectures delivered at Victoria
University College in June, 1954".
- second ed. 1957
- third ed. 1960.
- "Traveller's Litany" Wellington, Handcraft Press, 1955.
10 p. (Poems in Pamphlet, 1).
- "Oil" Wellington, School Publications Branch,
Dept. of Education, 1957. 36 p.
(A primary school bulletin).

- "The Iron Breadboard;
studies in New Zealand
Writing"
Wellington, Mermaid Press, 1957.
20 p. Verse parodies.
- "The Night Shift; poems
on Aspects of Love"
[by] James K. Baxter, Charles
Doyle, Louis Johnson, Kendrick
Smithyman. Wellington, Capricorn
Press, 1957. 3 - 61 p.
- "Chosen Poems, 1958"
Bombay, Konkan Institute of Arts
and Sciences, 1958. 16 p.
"For Private Circulation Only".
- "In Fires Of No Return;
selected poems"
London, Wellington, etc., Oxford
University Press, 1958. 68 p.
- "The Coaster ..."
illustrated by William Jones.
Wellington, School Publications
Branch, Dept. of Education, 1959.
31 p. (A primary school bulletin).
- "Two Plays The Wide
Open Cage and Jack
Winter's Dream"
Hastings, Capricorn Press, 1959.
48 p.
- "Ballad of Calvary Street"
Wellington, 1960. 2 p. Poem.
- "Howrah Bridge and Other
Poems"
London & New York, Oxford
University Press, 1961. 56 p.
- "New Zealand in Colour"
Photographs by Kenneth and Jean
Bigwood. Text by James K.
Baxter. Wellington, Reed, 1961.
- "The Trawler ..."
Illustrated by William Jones.
Wellington Govt. Print., 1961.
32 p. (A primary school bulletin).
- "A Selection of Poetry"
Wellington, Poetry Magazine, 1964.
37 p.
- "A Bucket of Blood for a
Dollar; a Conversation
between Uncle Sam and
the Rt. Hon. Keith
Holyoake, Prime Minister
of New Zealand.
Christchurch, John Summers Bookshop,
1965. 4 p. Poem.
- "The Gunner's Lament;
for my wife, Te Kare"
Wellington, 1965. 1 p. Poem.

- "The Old Earth Closet;
a Tribute to Regional
Poetry"
Wellington, 1965. 1 p. Poem
- "Pig Island Letters"
London, Oxford University Press,
1966. 51 p. Poems.
- "A Small Ode on Mixed
Flatting, elicited by
the decision of the
Otago University
authorities to forbid
this practice among
students."
Christchurch. Printed at the
Caxton Press, 1967. 4 p.
- "Aspects of Poetry in
New Zealand"
Christchurch, Caxton, 1967. 41 p.
Talk given in July, 1967, at
Victoria University of Wellington,
as one of a series of six lectures
on the Arts organised by the
University.
- "The Lion Skin; poems"
Dunedin, Otago University
Bibliography Room, 1967, 12 p.
- "The Man on the Horse"
Dunedin, University of Otago Press,
1967. 155 p. Lectures and an
autobiographical prose article.
- "a death song for mr.
mouldybroke"
Christchurch, John Summers,
[1968?] 2 p. Poem.
- "Rosalie and Patric Carey
Present the Globe
Theatre, 1968"
Dunedin, the Globe Theatre, 1968.
13 p. A list of Globe Theatre
productions and information on
the Globe Theatre School.
- "Ballad of the Stonegut
Sugar Works."
Auckland? The author, 1969. 3 p.
Poem.
- "The Rock Woman;
selected poems"
London, Oxford University Press,
1969, 86 p.
- "Jerusalem Sonnets; poems
for Colin Durning"
Dunedin, Bibliography Room,
University of Otago, 1970. 41 p.
- "The Flowering Cross"
Dunedin, New Zealand Tablet, 1970.
190 p. Essays selected from
material originally published in
the New Zealand Tablet.
- "The Junkies and the
Fuzz"
Wellington, Wai-te-ata Press,
1970. 4 p. Poem.

- "Jerusalem Blues 2" Plimmerton, Bottle Press, 1971.
2 p. Poem.
- "The Devil and Mr. Mulcahy,
and The Band Rotunda" Auckland, Heinemann Educational
Books, 1971. 66 p. (New Zealand
Playwrights). Two plays.
- "The Sore-footed Man and
The Temptations of
Oedipus" Auckland, Heinemann Educational
Books, 1971. 83 p. (New Zealand
Playwrights). Two plays
- "Jerusalem Daybook" Wellington, Price Milburn, 1971
(i.e., 1972). 58 p. Poetry and
prose journal.
- "A Walking Stick for an
Old Man" Wellington, C.M.W. Print, 1972.
17 p. Sociological prose.
- "Autumn Testament" Wellington, Price Milburn, 1972.
17 p. Poetry and prose journal.
- "Four God Songs" Karori, Futuna Press, 1972.
13 p. Poems.
- "Letter to Peter Olds;
a poem" Dunedin, Caveman Press, 1972.
7 p.
- "Six Faces of Love" Wellington, Futuna Press, 1972.
46 p. Lenten lectures.
- "Stonegut Sugar Works.
Junkies and the Fuzz.
Ode to Auckland : and
other poems ." Dunedin, Caveman Press, 1972. 19 p.
Cover title: Ode to Auckland: and
other poems.
- "Runes" London, Oxford University Press,
1973. 52 p. Poems.

(2) "Some Problems of Catholic Writers"

In the course of our correspondence Baxter and I frequently spoke of the difficulties encountered by the religious poet.

Some time in 1965 he sent me a summary of his opinions - two pages of typescript notes. It bore the title "Some Problems of Catholic Writers":

- (i) The focus and locus of our desire lies in the other world. The Christian soul waits in this world like a bride in an antechamber, who has not yet seen her Bridegroom: her wisdom is in her waiting. The fruits of this wisdom tend to be abstract, aphoristic. When she focusses full desire and attention on the visible present world, it is like a breaking of purdah - there is always a sense of betrayal, though what is written may be sharper and more exact.
- (ii) The not-yet-Christian has often all his talents and energies strung up in the search for truth, for final knowledge, for God. But in a sense the Christian, having been donated the fullness of revealed truth, can search only for amplification of what he already knows. The existential anguish of genuine doubt, genuine search, does not inform the work. He could be silent and feel it no great privation of mankind.
- (iii) The not-yet-Christian is free to give a sacred, all-but-absolute importance to works of art. A Christian must count them as mere coloured dross compared to one phrase of Scripture or one thread of the Holy Shroud.
- (iv) A truly Christian art is crucified - thus in part ugly (since suffering makes for ugliness) and also incomplete (since its deepest meaning will be known only in Heaven ...)
- (v) Art springs from natural contemplation; the life of prayer from supernatural contemplation. Where choice is evident one must choose the latter. How many artists have been lost for God's glory in the Cistercian or Carthusian silence? One who chooses the former must earn the wonder of the saints.
- (vi) Pseudo-Christian art is always angelic in character. It persuades that the Fall is wholly reversed in us; whereas in truth our knowledge of the Fall is the deepest on earth, for we know what is lost - and what may be regained.

- (vii) Prudence implies the deepest care for one's own soul and that of one's neighbour. I do not see how one could be a passionately committed artist without violating prudence - because one desires with an incomprehensible intellectual passion to delineate the world one knows - forgetting that truth is scandalous. One remembers prudence only when one has ceased to create for the meanwhile, and become a critic again. As critic, I often take myself as artist to task; as artist, I scorn or forget myself as critic.
- (viii) All art indeed is religious - in the sense that it involves some experience of primitive mysticism. If no religion had been revealed to an artist, he would probably come to rest as a pantheist, on the basis of his experience.
- (ix) Our religion deals much with classes, essences, qualities, generalities - a philosopher's paradise - but art deals wholly with unique particulars.
- (x) Art fights death, since death is the nullifying of feeling - our religion shows us how to embrace death, since we are thus nearest to Our Lord's Passion.
- (xi) Art is an intelligent dream of life in which chaos is given pattern - religion is the science of doing God's will, in which chaos is accepted as the working out of His will, nearly always incomprehensible in human terms.
- (xii) God gave us the aesthetic faculties, like the sexual faculties, so that we would be spurred, torn, pulled this way and that, and be ill content with any harmony other than that He will give us at the end. He is the great Iconoclast - for no image can truly (fully) represent Him - and that which represents Him best is the image of a man being most terribly tortured to death ...
- (xiii) By the effort to break accepted limits, art obscurely covets the infinitude of God.
- (xiv) In this generation the best Christian artists - Dylan Thomas? Picasso? - have been mainly heterodox or non-religious because the Church has hardly understood the void in which modern man is crucified. She has hid her face from the agony of her Divine Master. But these by intuition have seen Him and known Him as the Hidden One.

(3) An Interview with Baxter

The following interview was recorded for broadcasting on the YC Programme "Poetry Magazine" in May, 1971. An edited version was subsequently broadcast.

Weir: Why do you write poetry?

Baxter: Well, that's a question people often ask and the answer would have to be pretty subconscious. You'd know, you write poems yourself, you see ... Perhaps a solitary adolescence. You talk to an imaginary companion - that would be the psychological cause: to fill that solitude with another voice - two people, yourself and yourself as poet. There was an Irishman who said his writing was a conversation between the older man and the younger man inside himself. Artists populate their solitude. That's one answer. But why? Really it would differ from time to time and one wouldn't be sure of the reasons.

Weir: Now in Recent Trends in New Zealand Poetry you wrote "I don't advocate that we should all put on sackcloth and ashes but I think it reasonable and necessary that poetry should contain moral truth, and that every poet should be a prophet according to his lights." You wrote that twenty years ago. Has your position changed in any way?

Baxter: In some ways. I think there was a touch of subconscious arrogance in my attitude at that time - again quite natural - a certain crudity. One can't inject a moral message into a poem, and a prophet is not a prophet because he chooses to be but because God makes him one. I mean was Jeremiah a poet or was he a prophet? Well, primarily prophet, I think. You see he didn't say "Well, I'll write a poem." A poem is a freer, more personal thing, perhaps. It's not a message to the world at large. Not quite.

Weir: You would agree then with Fairburn when he said "The man who sets out with a message is quite likely to be a maniac of some kind."?

Baxter: Yes, he's quite likely to be. He may, of course, have a message to give, but this is not so common. Again it's this matter of bringing light to the Gentiles: that in actual fact the Gentiles may be the source of one's light - one's friends, the people one meets. I've said in the Church often "Go out and learn from the atheists and agnostics. Don't assume necessarily that you have some great thing to carry to them." What might be brought would be just intellectual furniture: the authenticity would come from parts of one's own experience revealed. I think well, poetry is often experience revealed. Yes.

- Weir: Is the poet in any way committed to save society?
- Baxter: I think everyone is committed to save themselves and society together. I mean to keep spiritual life in themselves and in society as person whether they're poet or not. But the poet is a man who holds up a mirror to what is happening. It's the truthfulness of his mirror which is valuable - the moral element in the poem is in its truthfulness. Many people misunderstand this and think that one can just give a message, but the poem, I think, is a mirror. That's the way it is.
- Weir: Now art and propaganda are usually at cross-purposes. I think that you yourself have indicated that propaganda will work only if it is unconscious.
- Baxter: I think any propaganda is probably illicit in art because then the art is instrumental: it's not just honest communication, to put it at its minimum. Now a Communist ... you see the Marxist poets write bad poems because they're propaganda. They're wanting to prove something ... But one has to say (and the same with the Christian poets when they are saying "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ" or start writing odes to St. Joseph or something) there's no point in this, because one is in just the same position as the man who says "I know nothing, I know nothing." I did say once "A Christian poet is in the same position as an agnostic one when he is writing." He is still dealing with an unknown life, unknown experience, trying to get it onto the page - a very subconscious process. He can't put a public stamp on what he says.
- Weir: Now then, when you use varieties of myth in your poems are you not going against your stated position of reflecting the world as it is?
- Baxter: Well, when you are dealing with the world you tend to see it as Chaos. Here is a scientist and he looks at the Chaos of the world, the multiple Chaos as it appears to the human mind - perhaps to the eye of God it is not Chaos at all, but to us it looks like Chaos - and he looks through his scientific lens and through that discipline he gives it an intellectual order. The poet does the same, I think, and the two - the scientific formula or the poem - are really equivalent. The poem is not more subjective: it's just a different style. I think that's the way it goes. And the myth is the form that the poet uses to crystallise experience.
- Weir: In Pig Island Letters you said, "The poem is a plank / Laid over the lion's den."

- Baxter: Yes! One has to be pretty close to the fire, I think, pretty close to this position of Chaos. The nearer you are to it and can survive the better. One critic of my verse, a sympathetic critic, said that I was like a man who worked very close to the bull, a bullfighter. You almost get grazed by the horns. Perhaps you do. Perhaps the blood is helpful that goes into the poem. But this is just as man: one is not doing this as propagandist or anything like that.
- Weir: Would that, perhaps, not make the poetry too personal?
- Baxter: Yes. There has to be some distance. The "I" of the poem is not the autobiographical "I", it is a dramatic "I". The poem is a dramatic device which one uses. People mistake the capital "I" of the poem (either the poet or the reader) for the personal "I" - the "I" that says "I think it's a fine day..." or "I love you", or something like that. No, that doesn't make a poem: it's a dramatic "I". You see, I said once in a poem ... I introduced the atheist self inside me and this became part of the poem Someone said, "You're not an atheist, Jim." I'd say "But for the sake of the poem I am." That layer of myself has to be represented dramatically. I think that's right.
- Weir: Does this not lead to contradictions within the same poem - to two voices speaking?
- Baxter: It mightn't be - it might be ten voices. That one with Mother Mary Joseph Aubert. Well, she would represent part of my own mind - perhaps the rather housewife figure of the Church speaking - very much a pakeha figure, of course. But I'm speaking on behalf of something else - the Maori pa, perhaps, or the rather multiple world of experience. Of course there are contradictions - that is the drama. Men just live in contradictions: that's the nature of man.
- Weir: You announce yourself as a Catholic poet.
- Baxter: Yes.
- Weir: What effect does this have on your verse?
- Baxter: Well, a man is a Catholic because he believes. He is a poet because he has a particular gift and function and also way of approaching things. If he says "I am going to tell the world they should be Catholics", this would be absurd. But if he says "I am a Catholic poet" I think the practice of one's religion has a very subtle effect on the way one thinks. I think that Catholic art - Christian art I'd rather say - at its best is wounded art. There is blood in it; you know, the wounds of the person are present in it. It's close to the Crucifixion. It's not Apollonian: it's more Dionysiac.

- Weir: Do you regard this as bringing you closer to the world as it is - this view of the poem as a mirror of reality?
- Baxter: Well, I did. I sometimes call myself an ex-poet. It's a joke in a way. At times I write poems, but perhaps I don't give them a top priority. At a certain point for one's own personal benefit one may have to smash the mirror. I remember when I was coming off the grog - it was in third-stage alcoholism - and I was writing some very, very good poems, I knew, which were of a negative, death-seeking kind (there were one or two that were really good, "Lament for Barney Flanagan", I think, is one of them ... but I realised that if I came off the grog and made a change in my life-style then my poetic mirrors would be shattered. And it did happen. For three or four years I was writing bad verse. I couldn't write good verse because I was recovering, because I was reforming my life. But I think the life morally has to have priority over the work. Old Yeats said, you know "Perfection of the life, or of the work, / And if it take the second must refuse / A heavenly mansion, raging in the dark." Well, alright, he was joking, I think. These things are never quite as severe or opposite as that.
- Weir: In his review of Pig Island Letters Charles Brasch claimed that you wrote "phrases, not poems" and regretted the diffusion of your poetic powers. How do you regard the role of aestheticism in art?
- Baxter: Well, Brasch himself would be an Apollonian poet, you see, and "Pig Island Letters", that actual sequence, is more Dionysiac - the blood-from-the-wound type-of-thing. There is a certain breakdown of form that occurs, but there is an advantage in spontaneity, I think, and in authenticity. I wanted that: just someone speaking authentically. There are other poems in that same volume though which are quite formal in their construction - the "Henley Pub" poem, for example, has a highly formal construction, like, as I've said, a strait jacket to contain the experiences of the manic-depressive, or something like that. Again a joke, one has to joke all the time. I think that when you get near to this chaotic centre it's best expressed in jokes often, and the poems may be jokes - quite serious jokes.
- Weir: Does this mean that you find a place for aestheticism in your late poems?
- Baxter: Well, aestheticism aesthetics is necessary: to have a form, a way of approaching things. One needs the form, When one begins to idolise the form or the artistic experience this is where the danger comes in, a sort of idolatry. I don't like that. It can happen so readily in our culture. Whereas actually the experiences of a poet or of another man are just the same: it's just that the poet articulates them. That's the difference.

Weir: The poems that you once wrote in the grand manner - "Wild Bees", "Rocket Show", "The Fallen House", for example - how do you regard them now?

Baxter: With regret and envy of another self who could make those formal structures so well. I think I did make them well, you see. I couldn't do it now - my life-style has changed. Perhaps some of my brain-cells have gone that were there then. It's possible. But I'd make use of the ones I've got. You get cunning: you learn to use the gaps in experience and develop new styles to cope with a different situation. Nevertheless, these very formal poems are rather circular: they're closed in on themselves in a way, the perfect round, this kind of thing. I prefer one that is like a house with all its doors open. Anything could happen, you know.

Weir: Do you consider that the freedom of your late poems (I'm thinking of for example, Pig Island Letters and Jerusalem Sonnets) reflects your life-style?

Baxter: It does up to a point. Pig Island Letters - I thought "That book will break the critics' teeth." I felt happy about it. The critics had sometimes annoyed me. It was not my reason for writing the poems, but it was a subsidiary thought. I thought, "Well, I'll throw it into the jaws of that dog..." and then he clamps his jaws on it and he finds he gets broken teeth, because it's made of rock, you understand me. It had some solidity. But the "Jerusalem" poems are different. They are more uneven. I'm not concerned with their quality, only with saying something. And some of them, I think, are good; and some of them are not good. This doesn't worry me.

Weir: Is there not, then, a necessary conflict between moralism and art?

Baxter: I think there is. But a moralist often has fear. Now the thing is, as Maritain said, "The prudence of the bourgeoisie and the prudence of the artist are different." They both have their prudence. But they're always in conflict. And the moralist tends to be exercising the prudence of the bourgeoisie. He may say "We don't want our kids to read this..." or something like that - that's a crude moralist, I know. Or he may demand a message. And the poet says "To hell with your message and your children; I am writing to communicate truthfully, and truth can be terrible." That is his morality. Truth can be terrible, but I'll speak truthfully. It is necessary that some voices should simply say what they think they know.

- Weir: This is the role of the poet as prophet?
- Baxter: Yes. Truth perhaps is prophetic in the sense that it will reveal relationships between man and man and possibly between man and God, you see. It will do this. But - I think this is the point - the prophet will not be troubled whether his poem is good or not; but the poet will be troubled whether his poem's good or not. And one can't make a poem prophetic. Rimbaud's Season in Hell happens to be a prophetic work, but I don't think he designed it as such, it was very subconscious. It was rather the place it occupied in French culture and literature. It was not recognised at the time as being valuable.
- Weir: You seek, then, a form of truth through your art?
- Baxter: Always, yes, I think truth has been predominant. I've sometimes said, you know, men are truth-people, women are love-people. We have to learn from one another. But some men are love-people, some women are truth-people. Perhaps that's why there are more heavy, strong male artists- because they are truth-people. But ... I'm not discriminating against women or anything: I'm just saying that's possible.
- Weir: Now it has been predicted for us that the truth will set us free....
- Baxter: Mmmm.
- Weir: ...but the truth will also scandalize. Are people sometimes scandalized by what you regard as truth?
- Baxter: Yes, that's right. When *Gautama* Buddha Sakyamuni went out and took his robe from the bodies of the dead - the yellow robe - and said "The ego is a hole in the ground; it is a gap." People would be scandalized, wouldn't they. And when he held up a flower for half an hour and said nothing people would be scandalized, wouldn't they. You see? But this was truth. Truth is hard to put a name to, isn't it? And they want a name, and they want a fixed position because they want their own fixed identity which does not exist. I think that before God a man is a hole in the ground. Yeah.
- Weir: Vulgarity in poetry sometimes shocks people too...
- Baxter: There has always been vulgarity. It's a normal part of folk literature. It's only because we are living in the ruins of the Victorian culture that we are so worried about the matter. Our position is confused, I think. Also the urban culture tends to cultivate the obscene. A folk culture, a country culture, a village culture does not have this in the same way. There are dimensions we've lost.

- Weir: Have you found a folk dimension existing in New Zealand poetry?
- Baxter: It can be found. You have to dig under seven layers of concrete to find it: a little bit of it in Fairburn, a bit in Glover. I think in some of my own work. There would be other places, too. The attempt to find the ballad - but this is so hard for urban man. You see he hasn't got a community. To make ballads you have to have communities. You'd find the folk culture in Maori songs, I'm sure. Well, talking of vulgarity, a woman makes songs for the shearers to sing. They're extremely vulgar - from our point of view perhaps obscene. This is an upright woman. She's making songs for the shearers to sing in Maori. There's nothing peculiar about this in the Maori culture. They'd say "That's fine!", you see. Does this mean a failure in morality? Not at all! No!
- Weir: You once wrote an article entitled "Why Writers Stop Writing". In this you stated that Christianity would supply both the framework and the tensions necessary for a man to continue writing poetry. In your present situation do you still manage to write?
- Baxter: Well, I do write, yes, from time to time, when I have leisure and when there seems some imperative reason. Sometimes my poems are instrumental, that is to say "Ballad of the Stonegut Sugar Works"... It is like a Marxist poem. Nevertheless it is true of its kind, I think. And the "Ballad of the Junkies and the Fuzz" - again it is social poetry to some extent, poetry of community, perhaps. I would not be so desperately concerned with how well the poem is made as I once would have been. "Why Writers Stop Writing" - well, to apply this Christian plaster to the social boil: I don't see it that way now. I think rather "We are men and have to learn to love one another and speak the truth." Perhaps I'm more concerned with the Church Invisible *caritas*, the love present in each man's heart which will bring him to heaven and to God and join him to his fellow men. But this is not a doctrinal matter any longer. Perhaps at that time I thought doctrine would heal more than it does heal.
- Weir: Perhaps the fundamental weakness of poetry of social criticism is that it tends to propagandise and doesn't contain the tensions necessary for good poetry.
- Baxter: That's right! It doesn't contain the conflict, the ineradicable conflict and contradiction of life at the centre of a man's heart. We could genuinely say "Perhaps this is the Cross, you see, buried in each man's heart." A man's life is always a contradiction. He has to accept it and, if he's a poet, express it in his work accept the pain of it and express it in his work. And then others say "This voice is authentic..." you see, because it is the voice of their own contradiction. You find it in Karl Shapiro's

Let the wind blow for many a man shall die.
 Laughter and grief join hands. Always the heart
 Clumps in the breast with heavy stride.
 The face grows lined and wrinkled like a chart,
 The eyes bloodshot with tears and tide.

This is a human man, you know. He's there in the Islands - a soldier, a man, an American soldier, but just a man. A man grows old. He falls apart. This is a contradiction when we are also immortal, you see. There's no resolution to it in this life.

Weir: Well, a fundamental anarchy seems to rest at the centre of your way of life. I'm thinking of your lines "The waves do not debase / Or drown what shares their fluid motion." Would you comment on this?

Baxter: One may seem at times to be debased or drowned, but then one comes up again like the dolphin. Perhaps this is Grace, I don't know. But I think that what is expressed there is the fundamental anarchy at the heart not of a way of life chosen but of life itself not chosen. It is there, anyway, at the heart of every man's life. The horror of moving into that area of fundamental anarchy is the horror that the writer... because it's like that tohu and bohu, the Chaos at the beginning of the world when the Holy Spirit moved on that Chaos. That Chaos is inside the human heart. We are in process of being created: we are not fully-formed creatures. And this anarchy is very painful to us, perhaps the most painful thing in the world - to know that one is a heap of Chaos being made into something.

Weir: And the poem civilizes that Chaos?

Baxter: It does not civilize it, but it gives it a form. It gets as near as possible. It has a great respect for this Chaos, this potential, and doesn't try to mutilate it, and it tries to hold up a mirror to it. And then the poem has strength because it is true.

Weir: You were considered a very promising young New Zealand poet.....

Baxter: Oh I know, yes.

Weir:What pressures did that create?

Baxter: It does falsify things. Well, one ceases to be young. And what is the promise of? - the promise of something which others wish you to be. Well, one's life or one's writing always turn out quite different from what either oneself or others wish or expect it to be. And then it's good to be about five jumps ahead of the critics, you know (if one's talking in the style of a tradesman).... To be ten jumps ahead of them. Let them be behind picking up the pieces while you go and do something else. Then you're in the clear ground, eh. Their view of the work does not give the work its quality: it either has that quality or lacks it. The critic doesn't give the work

its quality: often we think he does. (It's like the teacher thinking he can instruct: all he can do is bring out what's there already in the child.)

Weir: Some critics would think that you haven't fulfilled that early promise and they look back, perhaps with regret, to the work of Blow, Wind of Fruitfulness and The Fallen House. They would seem to regret the kind of shift that your life and work have taken.

Baxter: Ah well, old Yeats said "Now I must wither into the truth," and that is a statement of liberation, I think ...to become oneself, an old man standing on the ground, in my case with bare feet - that may be ostentatious. But then if one speaks, perhaps it's one's own voice and not the echoes of other people any longer. They wanted this brocade, you know, again as Yeats said "This brocade of old embroideries." Well, it was suitable at the time. Fairburn begins lush but then he hardens ... the lush plant hardening into a strong stick, you know, to beat people with, perhaps, or swing round his head, a shillelagh. One needs the shillelagh, eh! Truth is what I would consider important, not the way one appears in the eyes of other people.

Weir: Speaking of Fairburn ... he thought of life as a search for meaning and wrote "The more intensely we live the more intensely we are able to realize value...", and he added "It's the great negative principles - eternity, death, silence - that constitute the mode of our awareness." Would you comment on this?

Baxter: Yes. I think it was Edna O'Brien, the Irish novelist, who spoke of a stone wall in the ground. You know, here is this stone wall and it was built by the peasants: it is a symbol of their own life. It endures. They last longer than the life of a man, these boulders in the ground. They're like tombstones, these stones, and they're silent. And myself: I find that my own mind more and more gravitates towards this position of silence, death, eternity, whatever you like - the point of peace actually ... rangimarie, the state of peace. To be there, in that gap! And the poems will come from there at times like water out the rock.

Weir: On the other hand that need, that want, may lead you to refrain from writing?

Baxter: Yes, yes, blessedly one might refrain from writing. That's so. When I get to heaven, if I ever do, the Lord would say "You have spoken perhaps ten billion words during your life. Now that's too many. Were they good words or bad words, were they true or false?" I'd have to say "Well, Lord, you gave me a voice, and you gave men a voice. You know they talk all the time. Most of them are false in some sense. It can't be helped."

(4) Notes on Baxter's Method of Composition

In response to a number of questions I put to him Baxter provided some information about his method of composition. Some few of these details were contained in my Man Without a Mask, but because of the intrinsic interest of his replies the complete statement should be recorded. It is headed "Replies to Questions":

- (a) Normally I take notes on pieces of paper, later destroy these drafts and copy the final version into a Ms. book. But from time to time, when I am dissatisfied with a final version, I may make further drafts, usually on paper, but occasionally in the Ms. book. Often I do make some minor changes to the poem in the Ms. book - a word or two here and there. It takes me roughly a year to fill an Ms. book. I included everything I bring to any kind of final shape, even if I am aware that the poem is entirely a failure.
- (b) There are two kinds of poems I write - those that have a kernel of actual experiential knowledge; and those that grow from mental dryness and the wish to write a poem. The first are sometimes successful; the second, never - but I continue to write them out of stupidity.
- (c) Most of the poems I start are brought to some kind of final shape; but the number I would consider full and truly formed poems would be at most one in ten. A poem may be formally shaped, but unsatisfactory because of its lack of more than a fragment of experiential knowledge; and some poems less well shaped are more satisfactory for the reverse reason.
- (d) I do sometimes work up drafts of older poems - unsuccessful ones - and try to rescue what is alive in them. e.g., in PIG ISLAND LETTERS - "Postman", "Thoughts of a Remuera Housewife", and "To a Print of Queen Victoria".

I do sometimes incorporate sections of drafts into later poems. This is often a matter of an image or two - as when I shifted the phrase about the wind carrying spray to salt the landward farms from a discarded position in one of the drafts for "The Beach House" to near the end of the first of the "Pig Island Letters" sequence.

- (e) With luck I might complete about 60 poems in a year, but these would include about fifty that would not be up to publication standard. I tend to be continually trying my hand at it. Some years, though, are better than others; and I sometimes get a lucky run of four or five good poems in a row. Tut-tut! One mustn't number the tribes of Israel!

- (f) I think more than half of my poems go through on one draft or two with minor changes - as I grow older, though, and inspiration fails me, or the mind gets tired, or honesty forces me to admit how much of my work is ill-made, I have tended to make more drafts and changes, sometimes with very good results. Some of my earlier published poems should have gone through another draft.
- (g) I almost always write out my drafts by hand because it is a natural and biological procedure that way, helping to body-mind unity; my subconscious mind might recoil from the machine and leave me to my own stupidity. But the final - as it were, "published" version, I like to see type-written to get an idea of how it will look in print.
- (h) Really drafts written out are just helps to memory. The essential composition goes on in the mind itself, just as much as when Burns composed entire poems walking behind the plough, and wrote out final drafts when he got home from work. Drafts are just labour-saving devices in the mental kitchen.
- (i) It seems to me often that each poem is part of a large subconscious corpus of personal myth; like an island above the sea, but joined underwater to other islands. Each poem is thus part of the big single poem I am always writing to let God know I still exist ...⁴⁹

49. This document was received with an accompanying letter on the 25th of February, 1967.

5. A CHECKLIST OF BAXTER'S UNPUBLISHED POETRY MANUSCRIPTS

HELD BY THE AUTHOR

"The Ageing Poet"
 Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
The Ageing Poet
 First line: I praise God who does not forget me
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1966]
 Contents: Typescript poem (Cf. "Transfusions from
 the Irish"), 4 lines.

"Apparition of the
 Goddess Venus to a
 Sleepy Man"
 Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
Apparition of the Goddess Venus to a
Sleepy Man.
 First line: To postulate a slackness
 Collation: 1 ~~sheet~~ of letter-paper enclosed with a
 letter dated 4 March, 1967.
 Date: [1967]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 4 stanzas of 7 lines
 each.

Accompanying letter, 4 March, 1967:
 "I enclose a little poem about a common
 theme of mine: that the erotic in the
mind is or can be germinal for a new
 insight into the world at large: let
 us say, the innocent erotic, something
 the theologians may not have well
 identified, but which is well-known to
 me as artist: it has something to do with
 the immanence of God in the creation ...
 WOMAN is the image of God's creative
 fertility ... to achieve this knowledge
 is one of the underlying aims of my art.
 THE FURIES - what is most feared, rising
 from the subjective abyss - are the image
 of the love of God - the devourers of the
 relics of sin in the soul - to fall into
 the hands of the Eumenides is to fall
 into the hands of the Living God ...
 again an intuition I cannot fully achieve,
 but which represents a boundary of my
 art."

"Ballade of Good
 Intentions"
 Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
BALLADE OF GOOD INTENTIONS
 First line: I wish I were a millionaire
 Collation: Included in the text of a letter dated
 22 June, 1961.
 Date: [1961]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 3 stanzas of 8 lines,
 1 of 4 lines.

Accompanying letter, 22 June, 1961:
 "... some nonsense I wrote for my wife with a rhyming dictionary beside me ... This kind of Chestertonian crap would go down well with many readers. They like to feel that because they can recognise the rhymes, they are appreciating poetry."

- "The Birds"
 Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
THE BIRDS
 First line: The birds who talk all day in the ngaio branches
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of letter-paper enclosed with a letter dated 10 May, 1962.
 Date: [1962]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 11 lines. At foot of poem is a prose note: "(let us swear a pact, John, never to let anyone turn us into angelists - as I write this an earthquake has come to shake the building for emphasis - how excellent!)"
- "The Bureaucrats"
 Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
THE BUREAUCRATS
 First line: Like salamanders we don't realise
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of letter-paper enclosed with a letter dated 14 March, 1962.
 Date: [1962]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 14 lines.
- "The Chariot"
 Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
THE CHARIOT
 First line: Though the God Technology has lifted
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of letter-head paper (St. Bede's College/Christchurch.5.)
 Date: [1966]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 16 lines; B.r. typewritten signature "James K. Baxter". B.l. "for John", (Baxter's hand in ink).
- "Complaint to Our Lady in Winter"
 Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
COMPLAINT TO OUR LADY IN WINTER
 First line: In too long silence, Lady, though the words
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of letter-paper enclosed with a letter dated 4 September, 1961.
 Date: [1961]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 15 lines.

"Concrete Grady Under
Shock Treatment"

T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: CONCRETE GRADY UNDER SHOCK TREATMENT
 First line: The Trinity inside my head
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of letter paper enclosed with a
 letter dated 25 May, 1962.
 Date: [1962]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 6 lines.

"Concrete Grady's
Christmas
Meditation"

T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: CONCRETE GRADY'S CHRISTMAS MEDITATION
 First line: An old song of the music hall
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of letter-paper enclosed with a
 letter dated 2 November, 1961.
 Date: [1961]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 5 stanzas of 6 lines
 each.

"Confession"

T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: Confession
 First line: Our stiff knees bend, our scabbed souls ache
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of letter paper enclosed with a
 letter dated 18 August, 1961.
 Date: [1961.]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 4 lines.

"Dunedin 1962"

T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: Dunedin 1962
 First line: If there is any culture here
 Collation: Incorporated in text of a letter dated
 14 March, 1962.
 Date: [1962]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 12 lines. (A part of the
 poem is incorporated in Baxter's "On
 Possessing the Burns Fellowship, 1966"
 as published in The Man on the Horse,
 p. 14-15).

Accompanying letter, 14 March, 1962:
 "... here is a poem I have sweated down
 from a great many more lines ..."

"The Dying Nazi
Guard"

T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: THE DYING NAZI GUARD
 First line: Mother, your hands are red,
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of letter paper enclosed with a
 letter dated 29 May, 1961.
 Date: [1961]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 19 lines.

Accompanying letter, 29 May, 1961:
 "When Christ shared in the garden the
 pain of the men who rot in Porirua, or in
 His dereliction the pain of those who

choose madly to be separate from Him,
 was this a mere 'historical event'?
 I do not believe it to be so. We
 set limits to the Divine Generosity if
 we think that He is not mysteriously
 bound, Body and Soul to body and soul,
 to any man who suffers or has suffered
 or will suffer. Wherever we may go,
 He is beyond us already."

Prose-note at foot of poem: "(logically
 the anti-Semite must refuse the Body and
 Blood of Our Lord in the Eucharist)."

"(we are perhaps at last ourselves when
 we say, like the guard - I am Buchenwald'
 - not to refuse the Blood of God, but to
 know that it alone can restore us)"

"Easter, 1961"

Title:

First line:

Collation:

Date:

Contents:

T.ms. 1 p. (black carbon)

EASTER, 1961

Lord, to go like a blind beast is hard
 1 sheet of typing paper enclosed with a
 letter dated 29 May, 1961.

[1961]

Carbon copy typescript of poem, 3 stanzas
 of 14 lines each.

Letter of 22nd June, 1961

" ... I know the Cross is life-giving.
 But it gives death first, and life after-
 wards. The old delusion haunts me,
 which I mentioned in the 'Easter, 1961'
 poem of 'love without a cross' ... I
 must learn a much more powerful love and
 self-forgetfulness."

"Easter Sunday"

Title:

First line:

Collation:

Date:

Contents:

T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)

EASTER SUNDAY

As a first few spots of rain
 1 sheet of typing paper enclosed with an
 undated letter [March, 1966]

[1966]

Typescript of poem, 5 stanzas of 6 lines
 each.

Accompanying letter, undated:

"Was on the Milford Track with my wife &
 family over Easter week-end and felt at
 least half of the chill of the grave shift
 out of my bones - chiefly by renewing the
 sense of my own physical existence - and
 here are two poems⁵⁰ that rose out of it
 ... I think the EASTER SUNDAY poem

50. i.e., "Easter Sunday" and "The Track"

expresses obliquely a sense that the Eucharist can seem at times to us what the gas-chambers did to the Jews; it is very necessary to bring such ambivalences to the surface of the mind ..."

- "Epilogue for Ian"
 Title: T.ms. 1 p. (red ribbon)
EPILOGUE FOR IAN
 First line: The subject is not to my liking
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of note-paper enclosed with a letter dated 2 December, 1968.
 Date: [1968]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 8 stanzas of 3 lines each.
- "Faith"
 Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
Faith
 First line: With talk of God you pass the time
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of letter-paper enclosed with a letter dated 18 August, 1961.
 Date: [1961]
 Contents: Typescript of epigram, 4 lines.
- "The Fish"
 Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
THE FISH
 First line: Below the rust-black mussel aisles
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of letter-paper enclosed with a letter dated 10 May, 1962.
 Date: [1962]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 8 lines.
- Accompanying prose note:
 "(I had in mind the Trappist prayer of silence, where the soul in complete destitution is clothed by Christ our sun; what peace in the jaws of death! Yet it is possible we cannot find truth till we are wholly content with the ignorance in which God leaves us)"
- "The Flood"
 Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
THE FLOOD
 First line: In those long walks I took
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of note-paper enclosed with a letter dated 19 December, 1962.
 Date: [1962]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 2 stanzas of 8 lines each.
- "Four Words About Love"
 Title: A.ms. 1 p. (Baxter's hand in ink)
Four Words About Love
 First line: Eve said to Adam
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of note-paper enclosed with an undated note
 Date: [1968]
 Contents: Manuscript copy of poem comprising 4 numbered sections and 19 lines in all.

From the accompanying, undated, note:
 "4 poems, silly perhaps, for FRONTIERS ..."

"Hot November"

T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
HOT NOVEMBER
 Title: Sweet Michael, hunt the lion to his cage!
 First line: Incorporated in the text of a letter
 Collation: dated 1 November, 1961.
 Date: [1961]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 6 lines; "... a five-finger exercise ...", (accompanying letter).

"I Have Seen Your Church ..."

A.ms. 1 p. (Baxter's hand in ink)
 [I HAVE SEEN YOUR CHURCH ...]
 Title:
 First line: I have seen your Church in the face of a Maori girl
 Collation: 1 ~~sheet~~ of note-paper
 Date: [1970]
 Contents: Manuscript of poem, 7 stanzas of 2 lines each.

"I Wait for an Hour ..."

A.ms. 1 p. (Baxter's hand in ink)
 [I WAIT FOR AN HOUR ...]
 Title:
 First line: I wait for an hour in the car at Parakino
 Collation: 1 ~~sheet~~ of note-paper
 Date: [1970]
 Contents: Manuscript of poem, 7 stanzas of 2 lines each.

"The Instruments"

T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
THE INSTRUMENTS
 Title:
 First line: If this were indeed the final night
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper enclosed with a letter dated 17 August, 1967.
 Date: [1967]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 3 stanzas of 6, 6 and 4 lines respectively.

Accompanying note:

"Let us both pray to Blandina, the little slavegirl, one of the first martyrs - I read her story, and she seemed wholly of our time - the centuries are coming full circle ..."

"July 1961"

T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
JULY 1961
 Title:
 First line: This morning, just awake, you lie
 Collation: 1 ~~sheet~~ of letter paper enclosed with a letter dated 18 August, 1961.
 Date: [1961]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 23 lines.

- "Labour Day"
 Title: LABOUR DAY
 First line: Balancing on the rickety scaffolding
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of letter paper enclosed with a letter dated 1 November, 1961
 Date: [1961]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 23 lines.
- "The Last Judgment"
 Title: THE LAST JUDGMENT
 First line: The children have more sense than to be sad
 Collation: 2 *sheets* of letter paper enclosed with a letter dated 25 May, 1962.
 Date: [1962]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 6 stanzas of 5 lines each.
- "Letter to Frank McKay (1)"
 Title: LETTER TO FRANK MCKAY (1)
 First line: Keeping this heavy-headed
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of note-paper
 Date: 1969
 Contents: Typescript copy of poem, 6 stanzas of 6 lines each. (The original in manuscript is in the possession of Dr. F.M. McKay, English Dept., Victoria University of Wellington).
- "Letter to Frank McKay (2)"
 Title: LETTER TO FRANK MCKAY (2)
 First line: Man, man, man - lucky to have
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of note-paper
 Date: 1969
 Contents: Typescript copy of poem, 4 stanzas of 6 lines each. (Manuscript original in possession of Dr. McKay).
- "Letter to John"
 Title: Letter to John
 First line: Below this Taihape farmhouse
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of note-paper
 Date: [1970]
 Contents: Manuscript of poem, 6 lines. (Written after reading my collection of poems, The Iron Bush).
- "Letter to John Weir"
 Title: Letter to John Weir
 First line: Dear John - They'd have us locked away
 Collation: 3 *sheets* of note-paper enclosed with an undated letter.
 Date: [1969]
 Contents: Manuscript of poem, 68 lines.

Accompanying note:

"In the 'Letter to John Weir', change -

'Why do I badger Poor Blind Nell' -
to

"Why do I hammer Poor Blind Nell' -

my original word and the better one - I thought of 'batter', but 'hammer' implies sustained punching, and also the stroke of hammer on anvil which is part of satire - an effort to shape something."

"Life is the same..." A.ms. 1 p. (Baxter's hand in ink)
Title: [LIFE IS THE SAME ...]
First line: Life is the same as it has always been.
Collation: Incorporated in text of an undated letter
Date: [1968]
Contents: Manuscript of untitled poem, 9 lines.

Accompanying note, undated:

"An attempt to state what of course cannot be stated ... Not the Union the mystics write of - just the experience of being a Catholic, I suppose - or more especially, of being a convert. How poorly, how miserably, we always write of what we really care about!"

"Man, He has given
me the cross of a
child"
Title: [MAN, HE HAS GIVEN ME THE CROSS OF A CHILD]
First line: Man, He has given me the cross of a child,
Collation: 1 *sheet* of note-paper
Date: [1970]
Contents: Manuscript of poem, 7 stanzas of 2 lines each.

"Merciful Master ..."
Title: [. MERCIFUL MASTER ...]
First line: Merciful Master, let it be cold here
Collation: 1 *sheet* of note-paper
Date: [1971]
Contents: Manuscript of untitled poem, 8 stanzas of 2 lines each.

"Message to a Chaste
Woman"
Title: MESSAGE TO A CHASTE WOMAN
First line: Again burning in
Collation: 1 sheet of typing-paper
Date: [1972]
Contents: Typescript of poem in 4 sections totalling 47 lines.

- "Mr. Cogwarden and
Concrete Grady"
Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
MR. COGWARDEN AND CONCRETE GRADY
First line: A hundred taxis climb the hill of State
Collation: 1 *sheet* of letter-paper enclosed with a
letter dated 2 November, 1961.
Date: [1961]
Contents: Typescript of poem, 3 stanzas of 8 lines
each.
- "The Moment I was
Born..."
Title: A.ms. 1 p. (Baxter's hand in ink)
[THE MOMENT I WAS BORN ...]
First line: The moment I was born I was thrown upon
You -
Collation: 1 *sheet* of note-paper
Date: [1971]
Contents: Manuscript of poem, 7 stanzas of 2 lines
each.
- "The Monument"
Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
[THE MONUMENT]
First line: ... You who lie
Collation: Incorporated into the text of a letter
dated 25 February, 1967.
Date: [1967]
Contents: Typescript of closing section of a poem,
8 lines.
- "My Toe-nails itch..."
Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
[MY TOE-NAILS ITCH ..]
First line: My toe-nails itch; the days are hot and
dry;
Collation: Incorporated in the text of a letter
dated 1 November, 1961.
Date: [1961]
Contents: Typescript of a piece of verse, 4 lines.
- "On the Celibacy of
the Clergy"
Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
ON THE CELIBACY OF THE CLERGY
First line: O Amaryllis, do you think it odd
Collation: 1 *sheet* of letter-paper enclosed with a
letter dated 1 November, 1961
Date: [1961]
Contents: Typescript of poem, 19 lines.
- "On the Last Day of
the World"
Title: A.ms. 1 p. (Baxter's hand in ink)
[ON THE LAST DAY OF THE WORLD]
First line: On the last day of the world
Collation: 1 *sheet* of note-paper
Date: [1968]
Contents: Manuscript of uncompleted poem, 7 lines.

"The Person of My
Dear"

Title:

First line:

Collation:

Date:

Contents:

T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)

THE PERSON OF MY DEAR

Being so near, so near

1 ~~sheet~~ of letter-paper enclosed with a
letter dated 4 September, 1961.

[1961]

Typescript of poem, 7 stanzas of 3 lines
1 of 4 lines.

"The Pit"

Title:

First line:

Collation:

Date:

Contents:

T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)

THE PIT

It has been forgotten, I think

1 ~~sheet~~ of letter-paper enclosed with a
letter dated 1 June, 1962.

[1962]

Typescript of poem, 18 lines

Accompanying letter:

"I have meditated on your questioning of
the Bomb and have come up with the
enclosed poem - we fidget, John we break
the thread of silence that binds us to
Him ... and it seems to me we have only
to recognise our already existing
destitution (yours, mine, that of the
judges of the earth and the hydrogen
bomb-makers) and He is already there
waiting for us. His Passion was not
designed to bring us judgement but to be
with us always, in whatever state we
might be. Even poor Housman was groping
towards it, though he loses it by
shouting and supplying his own answers;
but the touch of destitution is in his
work ...

"The Rabbits"

Title:

First line:

Collation:

Date:

Contents:

T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)

THE RABBITS

At dusk the rabbits come from their burrows

1 ~~sheet~~ of letter-paper enclosed with a
letter dated 10 May, 1962.

[1962]

Typescript of poem, 8 lines.

Accompanying note:

"(our hearts desire is elsewhere, yet we
can delight in the holiness of those
creatures who cannot rebel, who possess
perhaps on earth what we will possess
without possession after the resurrection
of our bodies)"

"Song of a Civil
Service Poet"

Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
SONG OF A CIVIL SERVICE POET
First line: In summer when the leaves are green
Collation: Verse incorporated in the text of a
letter dated 14 March, 1962.
Date: [1962]
Contents: Typescript of opening stanza of poem,
4 lines.

Accompanying letter:

"As for the God-versus-Caesar dichotomy
which I tend to preach (without
authority, thank God) it is probably so
much a matter of temperament and feeling
with me that it would never hold water as
a social argument. I wrote an abusive
bit of verse recently called SONG OF A
CIVIL SERVICE POET ..."

"Song for Sakaymuni"

Title: T.ms. 3 p. (Baxter's hand in ink)
Song for Sakaymuni
First line: Loose as the washed pants and blouses
that flap
Collation: 3 ~~sheets~~ of note-paper received 4 June, 1971
Date: [1971]
Contents: Manuscript of poem, 22 stanzas of 2 lines
each.

"That a Power Greater
than Ourselves Could
Restore Us to Sanity"

Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
THAT A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES COULD
RESTORE US TO SANITY
First line: "Jimmy, I've got brains!" The whitish-red
Collation: 1 ~~sheet~~ of letter-paper enclosed with a
letter dated 4 September, 1961.
Date: [1961]
Contents: Typescript of poem, 14 lines.

"There is Peace in
the Mountains ..."

Title: A.ms. 1 p. (Baxter's hand in ink)
[THERE IS PEACE IN THE MOUNTAINS ...]
First line: There is peace in the mountains the clouds
move over
Collation: 1 ~~sheet~~ of note-paper
Date: [1970]
Contents: Manuscript of poem, 7 stanzas of 2 lines
each.

"To a Dead Girl"

Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
To a Dead Girl
First line: Twelve nights I lay as if on a bed of stones
Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
Date: [1966]
Contents: Typescript of poem, 4 lines. (see "Transfusions
from the Irish").

"To a Would-be
Mistress"

Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
To a Would-Be Mistress
First line: The dark-blue Tasman heaving
Collation: 1 *sheet* of letter-paper enclosed with a
letter dated 18 August, 1961.
Date: [1961]
Contents: Typescript of epigram, 4 lines.

"To a Would-Be
Mistress "

Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
To [a Would-Be Mistress]
First line: To Priapus the Virgins come
Collation: as above
Date: [1961]
Contents: Typescript of epigram, 4 lines.

Accompanying letter:

" ... in the one coarse epigram I am
having a dig at the inveterate female
romanticism which prettifies something
very old and very grim ..."

"To One Who Sneered
at Homosexuals"

Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
TO ONE WHO SNEERED AT HOMOSEXUALS
First line: This world the common man reveres
Collation: 1 *sheet* of letter-paper enclosed with a
letter dated 9 August, 1965.
Date: [1965]
Contents: Typescript of epigram, 4 lines.

"To Celebrate My
Thirty-Sixth Year"

Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
TO CELEBRATE MY THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR
First line: Some of the living lie down in Bolton Street
Collation: Incorporated in the text of a letter dated
3 July, 1961.
Date: [1961]
Contents: Typescript of poem, 4 stanzas of 4 lines
each.

Accompanying letter:

" ... here is a thoroughly gloomy poem to
cheer you up; you may not need cheering
up, but it cheered me up, by taking some
of the deepest layers of dirt off my liver
... It seems to have some kind of
fundamental validity. The small gnome-
like critic who lives somewhere below my
diaphragm has sent me several messages of
approval - a thing he rarely does ..."

- "To Our Lady in the
Month of the Dead"
Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
TO OUR LADY IN THE MONTH OF THE DEAD
First line: The lights, Mother, the lights of Gaza burn
Collation: Incorporated into the text of a letter
dated 3 July, 1961.
Date: [1961]
Contents: Typescript of poem, 14 lines.
- "Tomcat"⁵¹
Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
TOMCAT
First line: The boy with the brown sporran
Collation: 1 ~~sheet~~ of letter-paper enclosed with a
letter dated 9 August, 1965
Date: [1965]
Contents: Typescript of poem, 5 lines
- "The Track"
Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
THE TRACK
First line: The gates of the river widen. To be free
Collation: 1 sheet of typing-paper enclosed with an
undated letter [March, 1966]
Date: [1966]
Contents: Typescript of poem, 11 stanzas of 3 lines
each.
- "Transfusions from
the Irish"
T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
See individual entries under:
"To a Dead Girl"
"The Ageing Poet"
"The Sea Hag"
"Writing in the Open Air"
"The Dead Climber"
- "Two Songs"
Title: A.ms. 3 p. (Baxter's hand in ink)
Two Songs
First line: (1) My love came through the city
(2) My love is glad to play the fool;
Collation: 3 pieces of notepaper
Date: [1969]
Contents: Manuscript of sequence of two poems, both
containing 6 stanzas of 4 lines each.
- "Uncle Mark"
Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
UNCLE MARK
First line: My uncle, glummer than his dog
Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper enclosed with
letter dated 25 October, 1961.
Date: [1961]
Contents: Typescript of poem, 3 stanzas of 4 lines
each. (Some phrases from this poem have
been incorporated in the poem "Prayer
for a Duck-shooting Uncle", Pig Island
Letters).

51. This poem should not be confused with that found in
Pig Island Letters.

"Valediction"
 Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
VALEDICTION
 First line: The death-blue sluggish river in the South
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of note-paper enclosed with a
 letter dated 18 November, 1968.
 Date: [1968]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 2 stanzas of 9 lines
 each.

"The Virgin"
 Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
THE VIRGIN
 First line: Sometimes at evening Our Lady speaks
 Collation: 2 *sheets* of letter-paper enclosed with a
 letter dated 18 August, 1961.
 Date: [1961]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 9 stanzas of varying
 lengths.

Accompanying letter:
 "I want especially a doubled devotion to
 the Blessed Virgin and a great increase
 and binding together of whatever
 fragments of charity I may possess ..."

"The Wind That
 Blows ..."
 Title: A.ms. 1 p. (Baxter's hand in ink)
 [THE WIND THAT BLOWS ...]
 First line: The wind that blows from my left hand
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of notepaper
 Date: [1969]
 Contents: Manuscript of poem, 7 stanzas of 2 lines
 each.

"The Wrestling Bout"
 Title: T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
THE WRESTLING BOUT
 First line: I struggle with the angel, horned and sad
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of letter-paper enclosed with a
 letter dated 4 September, 1961.
 Date: [1961]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 14 lines.

"Yet If They Wanted
 To Share ..."
 Title: A.ms. 1 p. (Baxter's hand in ink)
 [YET IF THEY WANTED TO SHARE ...]
 First line: Yet if they wanted to share out what I am
 wearing
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of note-paper
 Date: [1970]
 Contents: Manuscript of poem, 7 stanzas of 2 lines
 each.

6. A CHECKLIST OF CERTAIN OTHER LITERARY AND PERSONAL PAPERS

(1) Letters to the Author from James K. Baxter

- 12 August, 1959: Criticising poems sent to him by the author.
- 13 January, 1961: Acknowledging poem by the author, "October Letter", and speaking of the difficulties faced by writers, including Catholic writers.
- 9 March, 1961: A note introducing an original meditation on the Mother of God.
- 11 March, 1961: Writes of his religious knowledge.
- 29 March, 1961: Of the Passion of Christ and suffering in the world. Includes part of the text of an article "which will never get written...." about spiritual conflict.
- 27 April, 1961: Acknowledges publication of "October Letter" in the Listener. Speaks of the state of natural contemplation which is necessary for the writing of poetry.
- 22 May, 1961: Comments on a Poetry Reading given by himself, Louis Johnson, Peter Bland and the author at Hastings.
- 29 May, 1961: Speculative theology concerning the Passion of Christ.
- 30 May, 1961: A note accompanying "Dialogue of Christ and the Soul".
- 8 June, 1961: Concerning the sacrificial element of the Mass and the effects of moralizing on poetry.
- 22 June, 1961: Discussing the justice of God and mentioning a critique he was writing of Curnow's Introduction to the Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse.
- 3 July, 1961: Some comments on plagiarism in literature and about the nature of marriage.
- 18 August, 1961: Some comments on his friend Louis Johnson and about the difficulty of writing poetry at that time.
- 4 September, 1961: About the Mother of God.
- 17 October, 1961: Concerning the Passion of Christ and our redemption.
- 25 October, 1961: Concerning salvation.

- 26 October, 1961: Concerning the interpretation of "That a Power Greater Than Ourselves Could Restore Us to Sanity".
- 1 November, 1961: About salvation.
- 2 November, 1961: Concerning the nature of women.
- 9 February, 1962: Commenting on my ms. of The Sudden Sun. Expresses his dissatisfaction with his employment.
- 14 March, 1962: Concerning the spirit of detachment.
- 10 May, 1962: Sensation, intuition and the growth of the contemplative spirit.
- 25 May, 1962: Concerning human suffering.
- 1 June, 1962: The destitution of the world and the Passion of Christ.
- 28 June, 1962: Concerning the love of God and of mankind.
- 8 October, 1962: Note accompanying part of text of "a tragi-comic novel..." (subsequently published in Review '66).
- 19 December, 1962: The sadness of the world.
- 26 April, 1963: Advising that he had resigned from School Publications and was working as a postman.
- 9 June, 1963: Concerning the tribulations of life.
- 28 August, 1963: Concerning death.
- 29 October, 1963: Including section 11 of "Pig Island Letters" sequence and a commentary on this.
- 10 April, 1964: A copy of a letter sent to Landfall commenting on R.L.P.Jackson's review of The Sudden Sun.
- 16 February, 1965: A note to accompany a typescript copy of "Ballad of Grady's Dream".
- 21 March, 1965: The need for spiritual detachment.
- 9 August, 1965: Concerning the power of the Church in secular matters.
- [March, 1967]: Undated letter describing his work in Dunedin.
- 1 June, 1966: A note to announce his arrival in Christchurch.
- [1966]: A note to accompany the poem "Mary at Ephesus".

- [1966]: An undated note to accompany a print of a Madonna.
- 15 September, 1966: Discusses his arrival in Christchurch to deliver a lecture subsequently republished as "Notes on the Education of a New Zealand Poet".
- 16 February, 1967: Concerning sensitivity and friendship.
- 17 February, 1967: Letter to accompany manuscripts and drafts.
- 24 February, 1967: Concerning failure and success.
- 25 February, 1967: Conveying information about the drafts of "The Martian".
- [February, 1967] : A final note on the composition of "The Martian".
- 4 March, 1967: Concerning friendship.
- 20 April, 1967: Regarding his earlier alcoholism.
- 14 July, 1967: Concerning his employment during 1968.
- 8 & 12 August, 1967: Concerning his participation in a poetry reading at Christchurch.
- 17 August, 1967: Concerning his impressions of The Sudden Sun.
- 25 October, 1967: Concerning sexuality and death.
- 15 February, 1968: Regarding his work in Dunedin.
- Undated [1968] : Announcing his intention of travelling to Jerusalem in the following year.
- 9 & 18 April, 1968: Further plans for his stay at Jerusalem.
- Undated, [1968] : A note accompanying his "four words about love".
- 18 November, 1968: A note accompanying a poem sent for publication in Frontiers.
- 2 December, 1968: Concerning his move from Dunedin.
- 7 January, 1969: A letter discussing the difficulties of his life in Wellington.
- Undated, [1969]: Discussing his life at Jerusalem.
- Undated, [1969] : A note on his poem "Letter to John Weir".

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|--------------------|--|
| 17 November, 1969: | His role at Jerusalem. |
| Undated, [1969] : | A further letter on the same subject. |
| 12 May, 1971: | A note concerning his arrival in Christchurch. |
| Undated, [1972] : | Concerning his life at Jerusalem. |

Besides these, I frequently received typescript or manuscript copies of poems without any accompanying letter.

(2) The Baxter Papers in the Hocken Library

The most extensive collection of Baxter's Papers is that held in the Hocken Library. What follows is a summary of the Library's holdings:

A. Poetry.

- MS 704/1-28 Manuscript notebooks - fair copies.
Volumes 1-XXVIII. 1937-67. 28 volumes.
- MS 975/1-25 Manuscript notebooks - drafts.
1937-c.1968. 25 volumes. (Includes annotated editions of Traveller's Litany (Wn, 1955) MS 975/13, and Beyond the Palisade (Ch, 1944) MS 975/25.
- MS 975/26 Loose papers - fair copies and drafts.
c. 1938-c.1967. c.75 items. (Published items include "from Shots Around the Target"; "Lament for Barney Flanagan"; "Rapunzel"; "a death song for mr mouldybroke".
- MS 975/26A "The Tree House: poems for children".
1956-66. 4 drafts.
- MS 975/27 Loose papers - fair copies. c.36 items.
1970s.
- MS 975/28 Loose papers - fragments and drafts.
C.48 items. 1970s.
- MS 975/29 Photo- and typescript copies of Baxter poems given to Mrs J. Baxter, 1972-73.
18 items.

B. Plays and Mimes.

- MS 975/32-46 Manuscript notebooks - fair copies and drafts. 15 volumes. The drafts and mimes deposited here are
- "The Spots of the Leopard." 22p.
"The Angel and Mr Mayverne." 3p.
"Tiger Rock." (i.e. Three Women and the Sea) 52 p.
"Tiger Rock". 21 p.
"A Question of Prudence and other writings". 32 p.
"The Roaring Season". 7 p.
"Mr O'Dwyer's Dancing Party." 34 p.
Fragment of a Play 14 p.
"The Band Rotunda". 36 p.
"The Gentle Ones". 9 p.
"The Runaway Wife". 27 p.
"Mrs Argyle's Id". 11 p.

"The Heroic Labours of Mr Mouldybroke".
4 p.
 "The Rendezvous". 5 p.
 "The Day Flanagan Died". 32 p.
 "The Death Givers". 4 p.
 "The Devil and Mr Mulcahy". 23 p.
 "The Starlight in Your Eyes". 22 p.
 "The First Wife". 9 p.
 "The Bureaucrat". 30 p.
 "Mr Brandywine Chooses a Gravestone". 16 p.
 "The Devil in the House". 6 p.
 "The Sore-Footed Man". 34 p.
 "Who Killed Sebastian?". 11 p.
 "The Wide Open Cage". 54 p.
 "The Bent Threepence". 1 p.
 "The Wide Open Cage". 24 p.
 "The Roaring Season". 29 p.
 "The Surf Club Party". 3 p.
 "The Spots of the Leopard". 35 p.

MS 975/47-79

Contains duplicated copies of various plays and mimes, namely,

"The Axe and the Mirror" 2 p. A further copy of 1 p. (incomplete)
 "The Band Rotunda". 42 p. A further copy of 23 p.
 "The Bureaucrat". 23 p. A further copy of 36 p.
 "The Cross". 2 p. (2 copies)
 "The Axe and the Mirror". 2 p.
 "The First Wife: a radio play". 11 p.
 "Mr Brandywine Chooses a Gravestone: a radio play". Two copies of 24 p. and 18 p. respectively.
 "Mr O'Dwyer's Dancing Party". 3 copies of 50 p., 39 p. and 39 p. respectively.
 "The Rendezvous". 2 copies of 9 p. each.
 "Requiem for Sebastian". A verse dialogue for three voices". 2 copies of 3 p. each.
 "The Runaway Wife: a comedy": 4 copies of 33 p., 30 p., 23 p., and 23 p. respectively.
 "The Sore-Footed Man: a play developed from Sophocles". 38 p.
 "The Spots of the Leopard". 42 p.
 "The Starlight in Your Eyes". 4 copies of 20 p., 11 p., 11 p. and 20 p. respectively.
 "Tiger Rock". 2 incomplete copies of 11 p.
 "To Catch the Hare: a one-act entertainment". 2 copies of 14 p.
 "The Woman". 2 copies of 1 p. each.
 "The Cross". 2 p.
 "The World Is: a one act play". 5 p.

MS 975/93. 975/99 holds

"The Boat on the River: a radio play".

C. Miscellaneous Prose

- MS 975/81-111 Manuscript notebooks - fair copies and drafts. 1970s. 31 volumes. Includes a considerable amount of verse.
- MS 975/81-83 "Jerusalem Journal", Volumes 1-3
- MS 975/84-85 "Jerusalem Daybook", Volumes 1-2
- MS 975/86 "Thoughts of an Old Alligator", 13 p.
- MS 975/87 "Elegy for Boyle Crescent", 17 p. (verse)
- MS 975/91-95 "Autumn Testament", 5 volumes, verse and prose.
- MS 975/96-97 "Letter to Colin"
- MS 975/97, 99 "The House of Lazarus"
- MS 975/109 "Pig Island Journal"
- MS 975/107 "Holy Cross Letters"
- MS 975/110 "Trawler Journal"
- MS 975/106 "Diary of a Visit to East Asia"
- MS 975/112-116 "Horse" papers, 5 items. (Drafts of a short novel, alternatively titled "A Ghost in Trousers". 65-85 p.)

D. Personal Papers

- MS 975/183 General Correspondence, 1942-67 and 1971. c. 91 items. Largely inwards letters include Denis Glover, Erik Schwimmer, Albert Wendt, Patric Carey, Charles Brasch, Maurice Shadbolt, Janet Frame, etc. Includes copies of some letters from Baxter.
- MS 975/184 Letters to his parents, 1939-1970. c. 62 items. Includes a few letters from his mother and some poetry.
- MS 975/187 Letters from John Weir, 1959-67. 22 items Includes some verse by Weir.

(3) The Baxter Manuscripts in the Poetry Collection of
Lockwood Memorial Library

The majority of these manuscripts were given to the
Lockwood Memorial Library after the publication of Beyond the
Palisade:

- Title: "Poems of Noel Ginn"
Description: 1 version, pencil on torn 4 x 7 notebook sheet, minor corrections; 1 page (on the verso of p. 2 of "O Lands Seen ...")
- Title: "Plank of the Aged"
Description: 1 version, pencil on 4 x 7 torn notebook sheet; no corrections; 1 page. (On verso of p.2 of "Song of the Sea Nymphs ...")
- Title: "O Lands Seen in the Light of an Inhuman Dawn".
Description: 1 version, pencil on torn 4 x 7 notebook sheet, 1 correction; typescript notation on composition; 2 pages.
- Title: "Song of the Sea-Nymphs ..."
Description: 1 version, pencil with minor corrections on 2 notebook sheets, 4 x 7; 1 page of typewritten notes; 3 pages.
- Title: "The Promise"
Description: Typescript, corrected in ink and pencil.
- Title: "Prelude N.Z."
Description: 1 version, pencil on torn notebook sheets 7 x 8.5, with metric notations and minor corrections; 1 typewritten page of notes on origin; 3 pages.
- Title: "Too Many Winters"
Description: 1 version, typescript fair copy, with notations on origin, 1 page. 1 version, pencil, with minor corrections on back of envelope; 1 page.
- Title: "To Live I Must Die"
Description: 1 version in pencil; 1 fair typescript copy.
- Title: "Spring, that is a trembling ..."
Description: 1 version, pencil with minor corrections on 8 x 11 paper; 1 page.
- Title: "Elegy"
Description: Fair typescript, 1 page.

Title: "A Bucket of Blood for a Dollar"
 Description: 1 cyclostyled sheet; recto and verso.

Title: "Beethoven in Spring"
 Description: 2 versions; 1 pencil on verso of concert programme; minor corrections. 1 typescript fair copy with notes on origin. 2 pages.

Title: "Autumn Waking 1948"
 Description: 4 pencil versions; corrections. 1 fair typescript. 5 pages.

Title: "The Mountains"
 Description: 1 version and rejected fragments, pencil on lined 4 x 7 torn notebook sheets, with corrections and deletions; 1 typescript sheet with notes on origin; 3 pages.

Title: "Let Time Be Still"
 Description: 1 pencil version. 1 fair typescript.

Title: "I Will Say to my Brother the Wind"
 Description: 2 versions; 1 pencil with minor corrections, 1 typescript fair copy with notations on origin. 3 pages.

A.L.s. to Khura Glover (wife of Denis Glover) n.d.

T.L.s. to C.D. Abbott (Librarian, Lockwood Memorial Library)
 6 July, 1946 and 27 February, 1948.

(4) The Baxter Papers in the Turnbull Library

1. Misc. MS 1255 "The Waves"
A manuscript draft with emendations.
No date, but catalogue card suggests 1965? Published in Poetry Australia, No. 9, 1966.
2. Misc. MS 904 Baxter's correspondence with Allen Curnow and Penguin Books concerning the Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse. This collection of letters comprises 2 to Curnow, 2 to Penguin Books and 3 from Curnow to Baxter.

The letters to Curnow (18 July and 4 September, 1958) concern Baxter's withdrawal of his poems from the anthology. The second letter authorises the inclusion of the poems in the anthology but is critical of Curnow. The two letters to Penguin Books set out in detail Baxter's reasons for withdrawing the poems in the first place and the second letter defends his position.
3. Accessioned but not catalogued; 4 letters and 6 poems in a recent acquisition from Kevin Ireland, London.
4. MS Papers 280 (J.H.E. Schroder): 21.
2 letters to Schroder, Dunedin, 24 January and 1 February, 1968.
Commenting on his religious belief with further comment after receiving Schroder's reply: "I have a hunger that all the people I know should get the maximum peace and sense of direction that is possible for them on this earth."

PART FIVE

A L I S T A I R C A M P B E L L

1925 -

ALISTAIR CAMPBELL

1. AN OUTLINE OF HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS

Alistair Te Ariki Campbell was born in Rarotonga on the 25th of June, 1925. His Dunedin-born father, John Archibald Campbell, was secretary of the Cook Islands Trading Company, while his mother was a member of one of the leading families on Penrhyn Island.¹

Campbell has few clear memories of his parents. His mother was, he wrote "... a mystery to me."² She died when he was about seven years old.

He knew his father only a little better and, if anything, "... resented him because he paid me less attention than I needed. He was never unkind - he was perhaps too casual, too preoccupied in his own affairs & left us too much to the care of servants, mostly young girls."³ He died early in 1933 on the island of Atiu, and the Campbell children were then placed in an orphanage - Glendining Home, Anderson's Bay, Dunedin - at the beginning of the following year.

About this time Campbell became extremely sensitive about his racial origins and recalls as a child of nine trying to scrub off his dark colour in a bath. He had a sense of being discriminated against, and this seems to have built up in him a determination to excel. Thus he became prominent both at sports and school work at the Anderson's Bay School.

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1. Campbell has in his possession a family genealogy compiled by his maternal grandfather which covers more than twenty-five generations.
 2. This and much of the following information was provided for me by Campbell in May, 1969, under the heading "Autobiographical Details".
 3. *ibid.*

After completing his secondary schooling at Otago Boys' High School at the end of 1943, Campbell spent the early part of the following year at Otago University where he indulged a new-found interest. In his last year at High School he had become interested in the verse of Byron, Shelley and Keats, and, of more recent poets, that of Day Lewis, Spender and Auden. Consequently, during his two terms at the University he began to write "... long syrupy narratives in the style of Keats's 'Endymion'."⁴ He then endured a minor break-down and, despite the disappointment of the orphanage authorities, refused to continue his studies. He later reflected on this: "For years I'd been at odds with myself, and I'd just run out of psychic energy, I suppose."⁵

In November, 1944, Campbell travelled to Wellington to begin work as a clerk in the Health Department. In the following March he applied for admission to Wellington Teachers' College and enrolled for further studies at Victoria University College.

After one year, however, Campbell again suffered a minor break-down and discontinued his course at the Teachers' College, although he continued his University studies from 1945 to 1947, during which time he passed English II, Greek History, Art and Literature, and Latin III.

At the University he read a good deal of modernist verse. The poets whose writing was especially influential on his own at that time were Eliot, Pound, Spender, Day Lewis and, briefly, Dylan Thomas. He published a few poems in Salient, a group in Spike, 1948, which he and Pat Wilson edited, others in Hilltop and one in Canterbury Lambs. In 1947 the poetry of Yeats "... hit me like a thunderbolt ...",⁶ he wrote later, and for some years afterwards his work was influenced by that of the great Irish Romantic. It is possible that what he learned from Yeats were

4. *ibid.*

5. *ibid.*

6. *ibid.*

the very qualities that he claimed Glover learned, how "... to write honestly, directly, simply, warmly, without fear of censure or ridicule."⁷

In 1948 Campbell worked for a time at the National Library Service before taking a job as an orderly-cum-gardener at Mowai Red Cross Hospital in Hobson Street where he stayed for about two years while writing some of his best work, such as "The Return", in an old army hut at the back of the hospital.

At the beginning of 1949 he travelled to Clyde for a working holiday and while staying at a fruit-farm on one of the river flats in the Cromwell Gorge he wrote most of the "Elegy". He was already familiar with the district, having spent several of his summer holidays there when he was a child. That sequence became the centrepiece of his first collection of poems, Mine Eyes Dazzle,⁸ which was published in 1950.

He returned to Victoria University in 1951, completing his B.A. that year. In 1952 he returned to Teachers' Training College from which he graduated in the following year. He taught at Newtown School in 1954, and in February, 1955, he was appointed editor of the School Journal, Parts 3 and 4.

During the 'fifties Campbell published very little new verse for most of his writing time was spent in revising the poems in Mine Eyes Dazzle. That extraordinary first collection was republished in the Pegasus New Zealand Poets Series in 1951 and issued in a new revised edition in 1956.

In 1952 he married Fleur Adcock, but the marriage broke up in 1957. In 1958 he married again. The year after the birth of his first child by this second marriage proved to be the most difficult of his life. His wife had a breakdown, and a further one after the birth of their second child. Of this

7. "Glover and Georgianism", Comment, 6 No. 1, Oct-Nov., 1964, p.32.

8. Christchurch, Pegasus Press.

period he wrote: "The strain of keeping things going - my job, family, etc., [was so great] that finally I cracked & went into Porirua Hospital as a voluntary patient in 1960."⁹ A number of poems - "The Climber", "Personal Sonnets", "Looking at Kapiti", and "Forgiveness", for example - give some indication of his difficulties at the time.

When Campbell came out of hospital he decided to build a home at Pukerua Bay. The associations of the bay with Te Rauparaha stimulated him to write verse once again and he began work on the sequence which was to be published in 1963 as Sanctuary of Spirits.¹⁰ The theme of these poems was violence:

I was obsessed with violence at the time, because when I was sick I was aware of it in myself, and I had seen it tending towards self-destruction in my wife. I had been ... at war with myself for many years & I was afraid that the violence would come to the surface. So, in a sense, I projected it into the symbol of Te Rauparaha & thereby I exorcised it.¹¹

In more recent times Campbell has become interested in American verse and his writing has been influenced by such poets as Lowell, Williams, Roethke, Simpson and Snodgrass. Their example has resulted in the looser, more casual style of writing allied with the verbal and imagistic precision that can be seen in Blue Rain.¹²

9. "Autobiographical Details".

10. Wellington, Wai-te-ata Press, 1963.

11. "Autobiographical Details".

12. Wellington, Wai-te-ata Press, 1967.

2. CAMPBELL'S POETRY MANUSCRIPTS

(1) A Description of Selected Unpublished Poems

Campbell has remarkably few unpublished poems among his manuscripts.¹³ Because he has never been a prolific writer he has been able to submit most of his completed poems for publication.

Nor do there exist many fragments of poems among his manuscripts, for he has invested a great deal of energy in the composition of drafts and has thus been able to bring most of his poems to completion. In times of mental dryness he has redrafted poems of an earlier period and submitted them for publication as if they were later work. Thus, for example, "Flowering Apple" which was written in 1949 was revised and published in 1972.

The earliest of Campbell's unpublished poems which still exist in manuscript are contained in a small blue notebook in which, in 1949, he preserved the best of the poems he had written up to that time. These love poems parallel those in the first section of Mine Eyes Dazzle. The opening poem will serve to illustrate the richness of Campbell's earliest writing:

Violantilla glass-limbed
Filly, O I will take you
Where the grass grows
Shy as herons, and reeds
Shoot greenly by fragile

Waters, where the swan
Religions her pale shadow
Like Dido's moon streaming
Through trees on waters,
If you shrink not from

My hooves, my stallion
Summer, although love
Hurts you, and all your
Limbs tremble like flowers
The first bees shake.

13. I hold, or have had access to, all of Campbell's poetry manuscripts covering the period 1945-68. I have not had access to manuscripts for the period 1969-73 - this is not a major omission as he did not write much verse during these years. No one else holds any manuscript collections

The other unpublished poems in this notebook are "Love Poem II (b)", (Echo's Song), "Love Poem III (a)", "Love Poem IX" - all of which appear to be elegies for Roy Dickson - "Love Poem VII (b)", sub-titled "Bon Jour", "Love Poem XI", "Love Poem XII (4)", "Love Poem XV (4)", "Love Poem XVI" and "For Kate at the Beach". Most of them should be regarded as apprentice work, as Campbell himself recognised. The last-named poem is an example of this immature writing:

O wind from flame-pure sky,
Lifting the casual sand
Upon arm and golden thigh
Keep far from the land

The cold rain and mist.
Soon, soon enough the day
When Kathleen my best
Must sigh, and go away.

Later work represented in the notebook includes "Bon Jour" and "Love Poem XI", both of which were composed about the same time as the "Elegy". "[They] were written in the Cromwell Gorge, but they're more soft-edged than the poems in that sequence."¹⁴

"Love Poem XI" contrasts quite strikingly with the poetic economy which Campbell was simultaneously achieving in the "Elegy" and "Cromwell Gorge" poems:

River, green river. I give you seven slim
Willow-sticks planted on your bank in neat rows,
Three and four; I throw into your fiery waters,
Seven apricots, seven peaches, the largest
And sweetest the orchard bares [sic]; seven plums
So heavy-ripe, like the grape-skinned breasts
Of nubile negresses, their drawn flesh bursts
At a touch, I offer you. Green river, river.

13. continued/.....
of his verse, although a number of people may still hold
copies of poems which he occasionally included with his
letters.

14. Letter from Campbell to the author, 29 January, 1974.

River, green river. Sweeter than your most delicate
 Water-flower fashioned among singing rocks,
 Are the spring-drenched hill-flowers I spread
 Over you in a garland, together with sweet laurel
 And poplar twigs scattered abroad with few words
 Appropriately said as befits a god. I offer you
 A chaplet of green words. Green river, river.

River, green river. Not without a plea in mind
 Make I these offerings, though you, being a god,
 Are worthy of such gifts. Grant in return,
 That my Marie who bathes here by starlight
 Encounter no harm from tide or watersnake;
 But like the moon may she dip her shining shoulders,
 And emerged, slide dripping into my arms
 Like the goddess of a stream. Green river, river.

The second phase of Campbell's writing comprises the "Elegy"
 and "Cromwell Gorge" poems. Among his unpublished poems "The
 Riverbank", dating from 1949, has affinities with them:

My love and I go out in wind and rain
 to see the mist slide the boughs of trees,
 and stand on the riverbank when black skies

strain with thunder and light up like a room.
 From a jutting rock we watch with bated breath
 the torn flood bear in its smoking arms

the flying branches of up-rooted trees,
 and though it is bitterly cold we inspect
 with joy the driftwood cast along the bank.

In a Landfall article Campbell once described his impressions
 of the southern landscape:

"After Tekapo you enter the real mountain country.
 The plain narrows & is deeply scored by rocky creek-beds,
 alive all the year round with milky glacier-fed
 water. The spell of the mountains - those dark druidic
 Presences! - is now everywhere felt, even on the
 hottest day. The air is dry & clear & exhilarating."¹⁵

15. "On the Road", Landfall, 12 No. 1, March, 1958, p.34.

The great primeval landscape of the Cromwell Gorge appeared to have its own life: at the height of a storm violence seemed to issue from it rather than to rage over it. Such a violence found an echo in Campbell's personality. It is rather as if, for the first time, he was able to tap the resources of his racial origins and traditions and thus release the force that is implicit in a Polynesian view of nature. The result of such stresses was, as Basil Dowling noted, a power " ... to compress into a few economical lines the elements of melancholy, terror and loneliness in our landscape ... " which was " ... remarkable in so young a writer."¹⁶

"The Riverbank" is clearly a young man's poem, yet of all its features the most significant are its animistic quality and its joy in violence. In this desolate landscape the poet, fatherless, motherless, and without a race, felt quite at home. In his Landfall article he described his reaction to the inhospitable landscape: "The Mackenzie Country! A wind-swept waste, strewn with rubble & bearing a few straggling trees & scattered clumps of tussock that gleam like hair. Oddly enough faced with this desolation, I am exhilarated."¹⁷

When Campbell writes of the southern landscape he does so with assurance and an acceptable rhetoric. At its best this poetry depends upon a direct expression of that disorder in nature which mirrors an internal anarchy.

A similar joy in violence is evident in a much later poem in manuscript, "Opossums after a Scrub Fire":

A cigarette carelessly tossed aside,
Or, - this being Guy Fawkes Day - a bonfire lit
By children who have run away to hide,
Kindled this murderous blaze. We watched it
Helplessly as the high wind carried it far
Up the cliff in a series of wild leaps,
Each accompanied by a crackling roar;
We saw our homes a group of smouldering heaps.

16. Review of Mine Eyes Dazzle, Landfall, 4 No. 3, September, 1950, p.244.

17. "On the Road", l.c., p.33.

But soon enough the fire had spent its force,
 And we went down with sacks and extinguished
 What remained, lest the wind, changing its course,
 Renew its fury - and there distinguished
 These burnt creatures being teased by a boy,
 Who seemed an agent of demonic joy.

Although the poem is a sonnet it yet illustrates the more relaxed style of Campbell's later work.

"Song", a poem of the nineteen-fifties, gives evidence of a bitterness which is rarely found in his writing:

A magpie's feather
 Upon the bitter wave -
 Those who die a watery death
 The scavengers will have.

Don't seek to know the Mystery
 All labour comes to nought,
 Like a decaying estuary
 Where factories empty out.

The end is a mud-flat
 Where the good and bad must sink -
 O pull the covering over your head,
 And never mind the stink!

"White Flower", a revised version of an earlier poem, dates from 1960. The differences between the earlier and later versions are not significant, and the poem is a good illustration of Campbell's instinctive lyrical gift:

This exquisite white flower
 Is practically good for nothing,
 Except for admiring or wearing,
 Or presenting with love and kisses

To this one recalling her honour
 When every promise is broken -
 An exquisite white flower
 Now without root or meaning;

Or to that one wounded in battle,
 Sick of the cause and the lying,
 Who now is good for nothing,
 Except for hating and dying.

This exquisite white flower
 I present to you in the present,
 Who are practically good for nothing
 Being without root or meaning.

The remaining unpublished poems among Campbell's manuscripts are less significant. "Memo to Mr. Auden" chastises the English poet for not revealing pity in his "Musée des Beaux Arts":

And as to that dreadful martyrdom, admit you willed
it into happening so you could write about it.
Mr. Auden, you are the ploughman in Brueghel's Icarus,
following a stage prop. You are the delicate
expensive ship that sees something amazing, perhaps
even tragic, a boy falling out of the sky -
but you have a poem to finish and sail calmly on.

"The Temptation of St. Jim" is an amusing piece of verse which questions Baxter's motives for engaging in social work, while "The Last President" describes Kennedy's reaction to the Cuban crisis:

He was too rash to know
the urgency of going slow,
too anxious and gave ear
to blind American fear.
When the omens were unkind
he gambled with mankind ...

"The Cry" illustrates the sentimentality which has sometimes marred Campbell's writing from the beginning:

A cry goes up
high above the chimneys
and TV aerials,
wavers
and tugs at my throat
like a child's balloon.
It is the moon
above the harbour.
It is my love for Albert
lost forever
among the silent chimneys
and shining roofs.
It was so soon gone.

Among his published work it is especially Sanctuary of Spirits which exhibits the poetic power of his first collection. One of the poems Campbell chose not to publish as part of the later sequence is entitled "Old Whaler":

The brig Elizabeth
 I remember it - the skipper too -
 a bloody-minded trader
 loathed by every man jack
 on the island ...

His judgement was correct, for this poem has none of the power and resonance of the remainder of the poems in the sequence.

One further poem existing only in manuscript deserves mention. "Loss" was written about 1953, a little later than the "Elegy":

Mist in the pines and the white road
 Through the mountains blind with rain,
 Impassable. She will not come tonight;
 She never will come again.

When he revised it about 1962 the poem became significantly different:

Mist in the pines,
 and the white road
 through the mountains
 blind with rain,
 Impassable to one
 who trod it once
 and never will again.

In its later form the poem looks back with regret to the source of his earliest poetic strength.

(2) Some Comments on the Genesis and Composition of
'The "Elegy"'

It will be remembered that Campbell spent a number of his childhood holidays in the Wanaka and Queenstown areas.

In 1945 he toured the South Island by car with a group of students, one of whom was Roy Dickson. Their trip included the McKenzie Country, Lake Wanaka, Queenstown, Lakes Manapouri and Te Anau and the Eglinton and Hollyford Valleys. Leaving the car at Camp Marion they tramped the remaining twenty miles, part of it through the uncompleted Homer Tunnel, to the Milford Hostel. Of the last stage Campbell has remarked: "That walk, made at night, impressed itself on my memory. The mountains were awesome in their power and beauty."¹⁸

Roy Dickson was killed on the 1st of January, 1947, while climbing in the Southern Alps, and his death "... sparked off the 'Elegy'."¹⁹

This remarkable early achievement originally consisted of three poems - "The Hollyford Valley", "Now He is Dead" and "Wind that Blows Cold from the Pouring Hill", a poem which was subsequently excluded from the final sequence. On a stormy night in January, 1949, Campbell again began work on the group of poems while staying at the fruit-farm in the Cromwell Gorge where he had spent many of his holidays when he was a child. "Farewell" was composed as a tailpiece some time after Charles Brasch had accepted the sequence for publication in Landfall.

None of the early drafts of the "Elegy" still exists, but some years ago Campbell made some notes²⁰ about the composition of the poem. They provide the following information:

18. "Autobiographical Details".

19. *ibid.*

20. A copy of these is in my possession.

"The Hollyford Valley":
the first verse originally read:

Storm in the trees;
Everywhere the cool sound
Of water, like bees
Hived deep underground.

"Now He is Dead":
line 7 originally read: "Of trees rooted fast in
stone"

"Now Sleeps the Gorge":
originally read:

It sleeps the gorge; within the storm-bared pass
It sleeps wild creatures, where they dig or nest;
The wind that from the cold floor lifts, and blasts
Upon tree-less slopes where the great hawks rest

Upon singing rocks their arrogant hearts;
It sleeps the mist whose tumbling woods unroll
Around the dark hills, and with dawn depart;
It sleeps the pine, and pigeon moaning knoll

On whose black shelves whiten and slide away
The rock-torn Clutha. O this bare place
Entombs such light, nor beast nor bird of day
Walks or flies but in its new-found grace

Of this version Campbell has remarked: "This is a very early draft and I had revised it considerably before sending it to Charles Brasch ... He objected to 'It sleeps', so I changed the phrase to the Tennysonian 'Now sleeps'."²¹

An early variant reading of line 9 was: "and glittering like a million sliding swords".

"Reverie":
Early readings of lines within this poem were:

Line 3: "Be plum and all things sweet".

Line 7: "Crushed against the sun".

Line 8: "Let the bright branches sigh".

21. Letter, 29 January, 1974. "It" referred to Roy Dickson's spirit.

"Driftwood":

the first three lines of this poem originally read:

In a sun-lit rock-pool
Worn smooth and dazzling white
Found I some driftwood.

"The Laid-out Body":

This poem was originally the closing section of
"Now He is Dead". Campbell moved the three stanzas
to the end of the sequence "... because they had the
ring of a benediction and seemed self-contained."²²

Although excluded from the "Elegy", "Wind that Blows Cold"
was first published as Part 6 of "The Cromwell Gorge". Campbell
probably located it there because it had little stylistic unity
with the other poems in the "Elegy" sequence:

Wind that blows cold from the pouring hill,
Breathe softly upon my love's shattered breast;
Bring odour of moss, of ice-dropping trees,
And the cry of wildbirds that pleased him best.

Sounds of rain, and cold mist in the valley,
And black waters foamless in the loud gorge;
Moaning of the spray through bird-filled branches
On a sea-hammered coast where storms are forged.

Blow, wind, blow across the blackened lake
The storm-clouds threatening his naked head -
His grave's a gorge, his shroud the drizzling mist
Upon wind-bared ramparts where thunder treads.

(3) An Examination of Certain Drafts of Campbell's Poems

Campbell has kept the drafts of most of the poems written since those contained in Mine Eyes Dazzle

What we learn from them is that Campbell's is not an impulsive but a carefully contrived art. Beginning with some kind of atmospheric verse statement the subsequent drafts test all manner of variations in language and imagery as the poet searches for the most precise form of expression.

They also show that he is very interested in the appearance of his poems. Any one set of drafts may experiment with several alternative line and stanza arrangements.

The 18 drafts of "Gathering Mushrooms" and the 23 drafts of "Against Te Rauparaha" illustrate the care Campbell takes to form his poems. The draft-making process also takes care of earlier poems with which he was not entirely satisfied. In 1947, for example, he began work on a poem entitled "The Dream". In 1963 he revised this in the course of a further six drafts. Again, in the following year he worked on it until, 13 drafts later, it emerged as "I Saw Three Ships".

Even after publication Campbell's poems could not be considered exempt from the process of further composition. The second of "The Cromwell Gorge" poems²³ is a perfect cameo of violence restrained to the point of inertia - a primitive world of stone, water and sky where only the hawk, symbol of the malevolent power in nature, is at home. When Campbell revised this poem for republication in Wild Honey he added a second section which described the impact of that wild country upon the mind of a child.²⁴

23. Mine Eyes Dazzle, 1950, p.36.

24. London, Oxford, 1964, p.38.

Despite Gunby's remarks²⁵ the addition is not entirely successful, the first section having an immediacy which is not entirely sustained in the second. Moreover, the emphasis is now taken away from the landscape and placed upon the psychological growth of the child. There is also a literary flavour in the addition which is not found in the original poem.

Similar comments might be made about the revisions incorporated in "The Mist in the Pines", a poem found in the third section of Mine Eyes Dazzle. The mood of the protagonists and the setting are in harmony, for bitterness is found in each:

The rain is falling; all day
The wind has blown the sea
Onto the land; all day the gulls
Have swept with mournful cries

Into the wooded mist-dark hills.
Above the pines, the long waterfall
Hangs in smoke; upon the road
The bush pounds in flood.

Hurt and angry you have left
My side, and stand beside the window
And brood upon a frenzied coast
With haunted unseeing eyes.

You do not answer when I call
Your name; nor hear the fruit-trees
Break in the storm-wrecked garden,
And bitter crying of the sea.²⁶

Yet the poem was not allowed to stand in that form. When it reappeared in Wild Honey as "The Quarrel", the first two stanzas were significantly different. The emphasis is now even more explicitly on the relationship between the man and woman:

The rain is falling. All day the wind
Has flung the sea on to the dunes,
And hung the rocks with dazzling fleeces,
And sung of dissolution in the pines.

25. Gunby, David, "Alistair Campbell's 'Mine Eyes Dazzle': An Anatomy of Success", Landfall, 23 No. 1, March, 1969, p. 46-47.

26. Mine Eyes Dazzle, 1950, p. 38.

Since nothing stays, what certainty
 But in our love for one another?
 Why then must we make our days
 Bitter with recrimination? ... 27

It is possible that the verses were first revised in order to correct certain metrical imperfections. The first three lines of the second, third and fourth stanzas have four stresses, but the first two lines of the opening stanza have only three. This explains why "The rain is falling; all day" has become "The rain is falling. All day the wind". The initial change necessitated subsequent changes in the rhythmical pattern in order to complete the four-lined stanza.

This may well have been the starting-point of the revisions, but, as happens so often in the process of re-writing, what emerged was something quite different. The process may, in fact, have been a rational one - Campbell may have wished for a greater coherence in the poem. Undoubtedly the subject of the second version is male-female polarity - a relationship not now obscured by the powerful evocation of landscape, but with the alteration a greater strength is lost. There is now also a pretentiousness about the poem ("And hung the rocks with dazzling fleeces,") and a making overt of what was suitably implicit in the earlier version. The poem has lost much of the powerful animism which informed the first version. Campbell's original instinctual impulse was surely more reliable than the later, more cerebral literary craftsmanship.

The best of Campbell's poems of landscape and loss is "At the Fishing Settlement". Even in this well-known poem there is a significant difference between the first and the later published versions. When it appeared in Mine Eyes Dazzle, its opening lines were "October, and a rain-blurred face, / And all the anguish of that bitter place."²⁸ The poem then went on to

27. Wild Honey, p. 60.

28. op.cit., p. 39.

develop the theme of a power poised within nature and within ourselves that tries to undo human life. The death-references, however, were once quite explicit. When it first appeared in a periodical the opening was significantly different: "October, and a rain-blurred face / Walking, walking into the sea."²⁹

Originally the poem recapitulated an attempt at suicide. In the later versions that reference is sublimated - all that remains is a generalised reference, "And all the anguish of that bitter place." Despite the excision the original mood remains seemingly invested now in the landscape to give an impression of a mysterious event of overwhelming significance.

One further examination may be warranted. "The Return" was written in February or March, 1949, when Campbell was working as an orderly at Mowai Red Cross Hospital. "The idea", he wrote, occurred to me one evening when it was raining. But all I remember now is the feeling of excitement both before & during the writing of it, which came easily."³⁰

It is a remarkable poem and one which defies paraphrase. It seems to have issued without stress from subconscious regions of the mind. At one level the poem may describe a return in memory or in fact to the Otago coastline which he viewed as a child, or to the Cook Islands of his earlier days. At another level it returns to the origins of a race. The poem evokes a timeless evasive world. Its incandescence and incantatory rhythms add to it a quality rare in New Zealand poetry:

And again I see the long pouring headland,
And smoking coast with the sea high on the rocks,
The gulls flung from the sea, and dark wooded hills
Swarming with mist and mist low on the sea

29. Hilltop, 1 No. 2, 1949, p. 15. Similarly, when "O Great Black Dog" was originally published in Spike, 1948 (p.22) as the third part of "Love Poem XIV" it was clear from the two preceding poems that it was an elegy and a kind of tail-piece to "At the Fishing Settlement". Because it has been removed from its original context this fact is not now apparent.

30. Letter to the author, 29 January, 1974.

And on the surf-loud beach the long spent hulks,
The mats and splintered masts, and fires kindled
On the wet sand, and men moving between the fires,
Standing or crouching with backs to the sea;

Their heads finely shrunken to a skull, small
And delicate, with small black rounded beaks;
Their antique bird-like chatter bringing to mind
Wild locusts, bees, and trees filled with wild honey;

And sweet as incense-clouds, the smoke rising, the fire
Spitting with spots of rain, and mist low with rain;
Their great eyes glowing, their rain-jewelled, leaf-green
Bodies leaning and talking with the sea behind them,

Plant gods, tree gods, gods of the middle world. Face downward
And in a small creek-mouth all unperceived,
The drowned Dionysus, sand in his eyes and mouth,
In the dim tide lolling; beautiful and with the last harsh

Glare of divinity from lip and broad brow ebbing ...
The long awaited. And the gulls passing over with shrill cries;
And the fires going out on the thundering sand; 31
And the mist, and the mist moving over the land.

A comparison of this poem with its first published version reveals a successful piece of re-writing. When it appeared the fourth, fifth and sixth verses were considerably different:

Men like wind-bred saplings, straight in the back
Like a spear, with long hard thighs, and fine hands;
And sweet as incense-clouds, the smoke rising, the fire
Spitting with spots of rain, and mist low with rain;

Their great eyes glowing, their rain-jewelled, leaf-green
Bodies leaning and talking with the sea behind them,
Plant-gods, tree-gods, gods of the cloven hooves,
Of miracle honey and milk, and the gushing rock ;

Gods of inland lakes, and still streams. Face downward,
And in a small creek-mouth, all unperceived,
The drowned Dionysus, sand in his eyes and mouth,
In the dim tide lolling; beautiful, and with the last harsh... 32

By excising the first two lines of the fourth verse Campbell has been able to eliminate the merely prosaic details which conflicted with the "magical" elements within the poem, thus

31. Mine Eyes Dazzle, 1950, p. 42.

32. Hilltop, 1 No. 2, 1949, p. 14, where it was published under the title "Landscape with Figures".

increasing its suggestiveness. In their place he simply advanced the first two lines of the next stanza. With six lines remaining and only four required he was then able to revise the unduly elaborate detail of the next section - detail which was also thematically weak since it borrowed from classical and Hebraic rather than Polynesian mythology. The result of these simple changes is that the poem is immeasurably strengthened and that the images now have "... an almost hallucinatory force."³³

With the exception of Sanctuary of Spirits, Campbell's later work does not have the animistic force of the "Elegy" or the "Cromwell Gorge" poems. He has replaced that earlier haunting evocation of loss with an even more fastidious concern for language.

Campbell's most significant poetic gift stems from a rigorous self-analysis and from his recognition of the root of violence which so often lies immediately below the surface of our lives. When he describes this, projecting that violence into a semi-private, symbolic structure of natural objects and elements, and combining with it a slightly romantic diction and near-speech rhythms, Campbell writes with an excellence of a kind not yet equalled in our writing.

33. James K. Baxter, The Fire and the Anvil, Wellington, N.Z. University Press, 3rd edition, 1960, p.63.

(3) APPENDIX"The Thorn-tree" - A Critic's Opinion

Section III of "The Cromwell Gorge" sequence, "The Thorn-tree", was not included in the 1956 revised edition of Mine Eyes Dazzle nor in any of his subsequent publications.

It is a fine poem which reveals quite clearly that animism which is such a characteristic feature of his early writing:

A dead thorn-tree stands
Half-way up a dark mountain;
Goats and sheep sheltered there
From sun and wind; a spring

Wells out of its roots forming
A cool basin, moss-lined
And overflowing. The musterer's
Dog drinks there, or did once.

In these dusty branches
No birds build; but once
A tui lighted there, sang
A few bars, until wind moaned.

The bird fell dead. Now
Nor sheep, nor goat comes near
That spot; but when wind moans,³⁴
High over it the wild birds cry.

David Gunby has remarked that the poem succeeds "... in neither descriptive nor symbolic terms ..." and thus "... leaves only an impression of muddle and indecision."³⁵

His criticism seems unduly harsh. The truth conveyed by the poem is an imaginative one. Antiquity surrounds it, so that the reader feels that he is in touch with some ancient myth, some story of the race, tragic but veritable. The curious sentence structure of the last stanza lends an archaic quality to the poem which reinforces it at this point.

34. Mine Eyes Dazzle, 1950, p.37.

35. op.cit., p.43

Gunby also suggested that the poem was subsequently neglected because it was then being revised to such an extent that finally it became metamorphosed into "The Rock Spring"³⁶ - a poem which appeared for the first time in Wild Honey.³⁷

Even if that were so, the poems are so different that they could readily co-exist in the same collection; Moreover, an examination of Campbell's manuscripts reveals that Gunby's conjecture is inaccurate, for both poems are preserved with Campbell's 1949 notebook nor are there any drafts of such extensive revisions as would be required to make such an alteration.

Replying to my question on this subject Campbell has said that he simply did not have space to include the poem in the later collections. It seems more probable that having omitted the poem from the third edition of Mine Eyes Dazzle because of space limitations his judgment was then guided by Gunby's article, for which he has expressed admiration. It may have been a critic's opinion which led to the exclusion of "The Thorn-tree" from Wild Honey and Kapiti.

36. *ibid.*

37. p.35.

4. A CHECKLIST OF CAMPBELL'S UNPUBLISHED POETRY MANUSCRIPTS.

(1) Campbell's Manuscript-book

Of considerable interest is the blue-covered note-book which Campbell compiled in 1949 and which contained what he regarded as the best of his writing up to that time.

The poems are neatly written out in longhand on half pages of unlined white paper, and the whole has been stapled and presented in such a way that it seems to have been intended as a manuscript model for a published collection.³⁸

It was provided with a title-page:

A LAST LOOK AT VENUS

A bracelet of bright haire about the bone -

DONNE

for Pat Wilson

by

ALISTAIR CAMPBELL

It contains the following poems:

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Title: | LOVE POEM I |
| First line: | Violantilla glass-limbed |
| Contents: | Manuscript of unpublished poem, 3 stanzas of 5 lines each. |
| Title: | LOVE POEM II (a) |
| First line: | At the great water's edge |
| Contents: | Manuscript of unpublished poem, 6 stanzas of 6 lines each, as published in <u>Mine Eyes Dazzle</u> , 1950, p.30. |

38. A number of these poems were, in fact, published. They are included here so that a complete account of Campbell's manuscript book may be given.

- Title: [LOVE POEM II] (b) / Echo's Song
 First line: Into the black storm-blasts, the stark
 Contents: Manuscript of unpublished poem, 3 stanzas of 5 lines each.
- Title: LOVE POEM III (a)
 First line: Call for him yet
 Contents: Manuscript of unpublished poem, 3 stanzas of 5 lines each.
- Title: [LOVE POEM III] (b) / Naiad's Song
 First Line: We sucked on his mouth
 Contents: Manuscript of published poem, 2 stanzas of 4 lines each and one additional line. (The poem appeared in Arachne, 1 No. 2, February, 1951, p.10, under the title "Death of Hylas: Nymph's Song".
- Title: LOVE POEM IV
 First line: Meeting my childhood love one day in magnificent
 Contents: Manuscript of published poem, 4 stanzas of 5 lines each; 2 variants from text as published in Mine Eyes Dazzle, 1951, p.18.
- Title: LOVE POEM V
 First line: Never so beautiful was human as you
 Contents: Manuscript draft of published poem, 4 stanzas of 6, 5, 6 and 7 lines respectively. The last two verses, slightly altered, were published in Mine Eyes Dazzle, 1950, p.28, as a complete poem, and reappeared with further revisions in Wild Honey, p.57, under the title "Miraculous Sky".
- Title: LOVE POEM VI / ON THE PHOTOGRAPH OF A NUDE SCULPTURE BY LEHMBRUCK
 First line: When you, my April, bring me flowers,
 Contents: Manuscript draft of poem, 8 stanzas of 3 lines each, having several variants from the text published in Mine Eyes Dazzle, 1950, p.26, and from that which appeared under the title "The Girl and the Statue" in Wild Honey, p.58.
- Title: LOVE POEM VII
 First line: Gently you move; and easily as a tree
 Contents: Manuscript of published poem, 7 stanzas of 4 lines each; 1 variant from text published in Hilltop, 1 No. 1, April, 1949, p.16.
- Title: [LOVE POEM VII] (b) / Bon Jour
 First line: Look up, look up into the willow tree
 Contents: Manuscript of unpublished poem, 5 stanzas of 4 lines each.
- Title: LOVE POEM IX
 First line: This muscular and diseased spirit
 Contents: Manuscript of unpublished poem, 3 stanzas of 4 lines each.

- Title: LOVE POEM X / (for Bill Oliver)
 First Line: O love, the heart of the thoughtless world
 Contents: Manuscript draft of published poem,³⁹ 7 stanzas of 5 lines each as appeared in a slightly altered form in Wild Honey, p.46, under the title "Lament".
- Title: LOVE POEM XI
 First line: River, green river. I give you seven slim
 Contents: Manuscript of unpublished poem, 2 stanzas of 8 lines and closing stanza of 7 lines.
- Title: LOVE POEM XII (1)
 First line: The stars
 Contents: Manuscript of published poem, 2 stanzas of 4 lines and closing stanza of 3 lines. Early version of "Images" in Wild Honey, p.49.
- Title: [LOVE POEM XII] (2) / for Bill Mabbett.
 First line: Dressed in green she came, and like
 Contents: Manuscript of published poem, 5 stanzas of 2 lines each as appeared in Mine Eyes Dazzle, 1950, p.24, and, with an altered typographical appearance, in Wild Honey, p.54, under the title "Green".
- Title: [LOVE POEM XII] (3)
 First line: Lie on the beach, my dazzling driftwood,
 Contents: Manuscript of published poem, 3 stanzas of 4 lines each. An early version of the poem in Mine Eyes Dazzle, 1950, p.27, and of that entitled "Dazzling Driftwood" in Wild Honey, p.56
- Title: [LOVE POEM XII] (4)
 First line: She, whose limbs are waters letting
 Contents: Manuscript of unpublished poem, 2 stanzas of 5 lines each.
- Title: LOVE POEM XIII
 First line: Evening through the gorge,
 Contents: Manuscript of published poem, 7 stanzas of 4 lines each as published in Hilltop, 1 No. 1, April, 1949, p.16.
- Title: LOVE POEM XIV (a)
 First line: Girls in bright frocks
 Contents: Manuscript of published poem, 4 stanzas of 4 lines each as published in Spike, 1948, p.22

39. In his review of Wild Honey (Landfall, 7 No. 1, March, 1964, p.84), J.E.P. Thomson wrongly identified this as new work. Certainly it was not published in any of the editions of Mine Eyes Dazzle, but its subject-matter and its style should have been sufficient to show that it belonged with such poems as "She has come to grief who was proud ..." in Campbell's first publication.

- Title: [LOVE POEM XIV] (b)
 First line: Face downward on the flood,
 Contents: Manuscript of published poem, 3 stanzas of 4
 lines each as published in Spike, 1948, p.22
- Title: [LOVE POEM XIV] (c)
 First line: O great black dog on the sand
 Contents: Manuscript of published poem, 2 stanzas of 4
 lines each as first appeared in Spike, 1948,
 p.22, and in Mine Eyes Dazzle, 1950, p.41, as
 "O Great Black Dog".
- Title: LOVE POEM XV / THE GIRL AT THE LIBRARY (1)
 First line: You are as beautiful as a tree that grows
 Contents: Manuscript of published poem, 10 lines, as
 appeared in Hilltop, 1 No. 1, April, 1949, p.16.
- Title: [LOVE POEM XV / THE GIRL AT THE LIBRARY] (2)
 First line: Warm heart, warm mouth,
 Contents: Manuscript of published poem as appeared in Spike,
 1948, p.22, in Mine Eyes Dazzle, 1950, p.23.
- Title: [LOVE POEM XV / THE GIRL AT THE LIBRARY] (3)
 First line: Because beauty passes
 Contents: Manuscript of published poem, 11 lines, as
 appeared untitled in Mine Eyes Dazzle, 1950,
 p.25, and in Wild Honey, p.55, entitled "The
 Price".
- Title: [LOVE POEM XV / THE GIRL AT THE LIBRARY] (4)
 First line: I will remember this day as childhood
 Contents: Manuscript of published poem, 13 lines, as
 appeared in Hilltop, 1 No. 1, April, 1949, p.17.
- Title: LOVE POEM XVI
 First line: This is Eve, then? The temptress Eve?
 Contents: Manuscript of unpublished poem, 2 stanzas of
 13 lines.
- Title: LOVE POEM XVII
 First line: I should have met you at the outskirts
 Contents: Manuscript of published poem, 2 stanzas of 10
 and 7 lines respectively as published in Spike,
 1948, p.23: an earlier version of "Call
 Girl" in Wild Honey, p.62.
- Title: LOVE POEM XIX : ON A DEAD GIRL (1)
 First line: She has come to grief, who was proud
 Contents: Manuscript of published poem, 5 stanzas of 4
 lines each, as published in Mine Eyes Dazzle,
 1950, p.29, and, in a revised form, as "The
 Waterfall" in Wild Honey, p.61.

A number of other poems are held loosely at the back of the booklet - these having been removed from their original position in the sequence at some time. The poems are:

- Title: (3) HIS TERRIBLE MISTRESS
 First line: This blonde girl is beautiful enough;
 Contents: Manuscript of published poem, 3 stanzas of 4 lines each. A revised form of the poem was published under the title "Girl and Landscape" in Hilltop, 1 No. 2, 1949, p.14, and as "Blonde Girl" in Wild Honey, p.40.
- Title: FABLE
 First line: A dead thorn-tree stands
 Contents: Manuscript of published poem, 4 stanzas of 4 lines each, as appeared in Mine Eyes Dazzle, 1950, p.37, under the title "The Thorn-tree".
- Title: FOR KATE AT THE BEACH
 First line: O wind from flame-pure sky
 Contents: Manuscript of unpublished poem, 2 stanzas of 4 lines each.
- Title: THE MOUNTAIN SPRING
 First line: We never knew the spring was there
 Contents: Manuscript of published poem, 3 stanzas of 4 lines each; an earlier version of the poem published as "The Rock Spring" in Wild Honey, p.35.

(2) Other Completed Poems Remaining in Manuscript

A number of other poems exist separately in Campbell's manuscript collection. They are:

- "The Fall" T.ms., 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: The Fall
 First line: Into the black storm winds, the stark
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1962]
 Contents: Typescript of poem, 3 stanzas of 4 lines each; several emendations in ink. B.r. "1949-62".

Letter, 29th January, 1974: "I don't have any poems of the Cromwell Gorge period existing only in draft. I'm sending you one from that period, but revised in 1962, which has been published, but I can't recall where." (In point of fact, it is my belief that "The Fall" has not been published).

- "Flowering Apple" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: Flowering Apple
 First line: It is a long-lost waterfall
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1973]
 Contents: Typescript of published poem, 3 stanzas of 4 lines each; several emendations and corrections.
- Note: Poem composed in 1949. Further emendations made in 1971. Subsequently published in the Listener, 1712, 4 September, 1972, p.60.
- "The Last President" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: The Last President
 First line: He was too rash to know
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of letter-paper
 Date: [1961]
 Contents: Typescript of unpublished poem, 16 lines.
- Letter, 2 October, 1973: "I sent ...['The Last President'] to the Listener at the time of the Cuban scene in 1961 (?) ... [it was] rejected. I don't feel strongly about [it] , although [it] is not without merit."
- "Loss" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: Loss
 First line: Mist in the pines
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of notepaper
 Date: [1962]
 Contents: Typescript of unpublished poem, 7 lines; poem subsequently cancelled by double lines. An earlier 4-lined version was composed in 1953.
- "Memo to Mr. Auden" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: Memo to Mr. Auden
 First line: Re. your Musee des Beaux Arts, Mr. Auden
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1973]
 Contents: Typescript copy of unpublished poem, 30 lines; 1 emendation and 3 corrections in ink. Poem composed in 1966.
- Letter, 2 October, 1973: "I have a sneaking fondness for it, because it is skilful & amusing - but of course it's unfair to Auden."
- "Opossums after a Scrub Fire" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: Opossums after a Scrub Fire
 First line: A cigarette carelessly tossed aside,
 Collation: 1 *sheet* of notepaper
 Date: [1961-66]
 Contents: Typescript of unpublished poem, 14 lines; 1 emendation in ink.
- Note: Poem rejected by the Listener.

"The Riverbank" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: The Riverbank
 First line: My love and I go out in wind and rain
 Collation: 1 sheet of typing paper
 Date: [1973]
 Contents: Typescript copy of unpublished poem, 3 stanzas of 3 lines each; several emendations in black ink. B.r. Typed signature "Alistair Campbell" and "c. 1949".

Note: Poem composed about 1949 and revised in 1973.

Letter, 2 October, 1973: "... just a trifle which I've just touched up as you can see. It plainly belongs to the same period as the "Elegy" of which it contains echoes."

"Song" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: Song
 First line: A magpie's feather.
 Collation: 1 ~~sheet~~ of notepaper
 Date: [1962]
 Contents: Typescript of unpublished poem, 3 stanzas of 4 lines each.

Letter, 29 January, 1974: "... a rather bitter thing I began in the late 'fifties and finished about 1962."

"The Temptation of St. Jim" T.ms. 2 p. (black ribbon)
 Title: The Temptation of St. Jim / for J [ames] K. B [axter] .
 First line: What most do you lack
 Collation: 1 ~~sheet~~ of notepaper
 Date: [1958-60]
 Contents: Typescript of unpublished poem, 13 stanzas of 3 lines each; 1 line emended in ink.

Letter, 2 October, 1973: "I'm not sure I can say [there is much merit in] 'The Temptation of St. Jim' - despite Jim's liking for it. At one time he thought of compiling an anthology of N.Z. light verse & wanted to include it. I suppose Jim liked it because it catches the kind of girl he was consoling, with very mixed motives, at the time."

(3) Drafts of Campbell's Published and Unpublished Poems

These drafts are contained in two bulky folders which Campbell sent me in 1968. They reveal that much of Campbell's writing-life has been taken up with draft-making and with further revisions of earlier published and unpublished poems.

- "Alone" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
Preliminary draft of the poem published as
"Why Don't You Talk To Me?" [1965]
- "Becoming" A.ms. 1 p. (Campbell's hand in ink)
2 drafts of an unpublished poem. Second
draft entitled "Infinitives". [1965-68]
- "Blue Rain" A. and T.ms. 10 p. (black ribbon and
Campbell's hand in ink)
11 drafts of published poem. First draft
entitled "Blue Weather".
- "Blue Weather" (cf. "Blue Rain")
- "Cages" (cf. "The Trap")
- "Cicada" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
Draft of published poem - Section I of "Haiku".
Found below Draft 6 of "Nobby Clark". [1966]
- "The Climber" A.ms. 2 p. (Campbell's hand in pencil)
Draft of published poem. [1961]
- "The Cry" A.ms. 1 p. (Campbell's hand in ink)
2 drafts of unpublished poem. [1965-68]
- "The Dead
Hedgehog" A. and T.ms. 15 p. (black ribbon and
Campbell's hand in ink)
18 drafts of published poem (i.e., "Gathering
Mushrooms"). Drafts variously entitled:
- "The Dead Hedgehog"
"The Dead Hedgehog and the Horseman"
"The Horseman"
"The Knight"
"Gathering Mushrooms"
- 1 draft contains note "12.55 a.m. Aug 13 1964"
[1964-65]
- "The Dead
Hedgehog and
the Horseman" (Cf. "The Dead Hedgehog")
- "The Dream" A.ms. 5 p. (Campbell's hand in ink)
6 drafts of published poem (i.e., "I Saw Three
Ships". [1963]
- "Exile" A. and T.ms. 14 p. (black ribbon and
Campbell's hand in ink)
13 drafts variously entitled "Exile" and "In
Exile", of a poem published under the title
"Small Town Blues". 1st draft bears heading
"Written in a hotel in Masterton on a tour of
schools June 1967". Penultimate draft dated
"17.6.67".

- "Forgiveness" A.ms. 5 p. (Campbell's hand in pencil and ink)
5 drafts of published poem. [1962]
- "Gathering
Mushrooms" (cf. "The Dead Hedgehog")
- "Eden" A. and T.ms. (black ribbon and Campbell's hand
in ink)
3 drafts of unpublished poem. [1960-65?]
- "The Gift" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
Draft of published poem (i.e., "The Girl and
the Statue", Wild Honey, p.64).
- "The Gunfighter" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
Draft of published poem. [1966]
- "Haiku" (cf. "Cicada" and "Shag")
- "Harvest" A.ms. 1 p. (Campbell's hand in ink)
Draft of published poem (i.e., "Bitter Harvest").
[1956-57?]
- "The Horseman" (cf. "The Dead Hedgehog")
- "I Saw Three
Ships" A. and T.ms. 13 p. (black ribbon and Campbell's
hand in ink)
13 drafts representing further workings of "The
Dream" (q.v.). Three of these drafts are
dated "7.1.64", "9.1.64" and "22.1.64".
- "If Grace No
More May Animate" A. and T.ms. 5 p. (black ribbon and
Campbell's hand in ink)
5 drafts of untitled poem [1948-50], published
as "The Lament of Jack Everyman", Mine Eyes
Dazzle, 1951, p.31.
- "In Exile" (cf. "Exile")
- "Infinitives" (cf. "Becoming")
- "The Knight" (cf. "The Dead Hedgehog")
- "The Lament of
Jack Everyman" (cf. "If Grace No More May Animate")
- "Looking at
Kapiti" A.ms. 2 p. (Campbell's hand in ink)
2 drafts of published poem; second draft dated
"November 1959".
- "Make Your Mind
a Blank" (cf. "Sitting Still")

- "Nobby Clark" A. and T.ms. 13 p. (black ribbon and Campbell's hand in ink)
10 drafts of published poem. [1966]
- "An Old Lady Dying" A.ms. 1 p. (Campbell's hand in ink)
Draft of published poem, (i.e., "Old Lady Dying "). [1964-66]
- "Purple Chaos" T.ms. 1 p. (black ribbon)
Draft of published poem. [1966]
- "Shag" A.ms. 1 p. (Campbell's hand in ink and pencil)
2 drafts of published poem (cf. "Haiku"). Found below Draft 6 of "Nobby Clark". [1966]
- "The Sirens' Cave" T.ms. 4 p. (black ribbon)
5 drafts of published poem. [1967]
- "Sitting Still" A. and T.ms. 3 p. (black ribbon and Campbell's hand in ink)
12 drafts of published poem (i.e., "Make Your Mind a Blank"). One draft has a note "... written 4.10.66".
- "Superlatives" (cf. "The Trap")
- "The Trap" A.ms. 3 p. (Campbell's hand in ink)
7 drafts of published poem. The drafts are variously entitled "The Trap", "Two Things", "Superlatives", "Cages". Note on final version: "Finished 3.8.65".
- "Two Things" (cf. "The Trap")
- "Why Don't You Talk To Me?" (cf. "Alone")
- "Wild Honey" A.ms. 1 p. (Campbell's hand in ink)
1 draft of published poem dated "7.10.60".
- "White Flower" A. and T.ms. 2 p. (black ribbon and Campbell's hand in ink)
2 drafts of unpublished poem, 4 stanzas of 4 lines each. 1st draft, 1949; 2nd draft, 1960.

Drafts of "Sanctuary of Spirits"

Among the drafts Campbell sent me in 1968 were the extensive workings of Sanctuary of Spirits (1963), namely, 5 substantially different drafts of a prose introduction. The earliest of these has a preliminary sketch on the reverse side.

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| 1. | "Kapiti" | 9 drafts. 3 further drafts of sub-sections. |
| 2. | "Old Woman" | 7 drafts headed variously "Tangahoe" and "Old Woman". |
| 3. | "Old Man" | 8 drafts. |
| 4. | "Convolvulus" | 7 drafts variously entitled "Convolvulus", "Convolvulus Leaf" and "Leaf of the Paraha". |
| 5. | "Tukitukipatuaruhe" | 9 drafts. |
| 6. | "Tamihana Te Rauparaha" | 15 drafts. |
| 7. | "Nga Roimata" | 8 drafts. |
| 8. | "Kaiapoi" | 9 drafts. |
| 9. | "Against Te Rauparaha" | 23 drafts variously entitled "Against Te Rauparaha", "Letter to Te Rauparaha" and "Request to Te Rauparaha". Dated "11-29.12.62". |

There are also 6 drafts which seem to have derived from a section of "Against Te Rauparaha" and become a separately-published poem, "Reflections on Some Great Chiefs".

The section headed "Old Whaler", of which there are 2 drafts, was not included in the published poem.

These drafts total 192 pages and illustrate the exhaustive nature of Campbell's compositional process.